

# Workplace bullying at a higher education institution in South Africa

M BADENHORST

 [orcid.org/0000-0002-8604-9993](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8604-9993)

Dissertation accepted for the degree *Magister Scientiae in Industrial Sociology* at the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof D Botha

Graduation: May/June 2022

Student number: 24154784

## DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I solemnly declare that I authored the work contained within. The dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Scientiae in Industrial Sociology at the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced accordingly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. O. Badenhorst', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marius-Olaf Badenhorst

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people, without them this project would not have been possible.

- Firstly, my heavenly father that gave me the ability and strength to complete this research project. Furthermore, for the blessings throughout the study period.
- To my late Mother, Erna Badenhorst, I know that you are proud of me for what I have accomplished, thank you for all the support and love that you showed throughout the years that turned me into who I am today.
- To my Father, Marius Badenhorst, thank you for all your support and understanding throughout this journey. You have made such an impact on my life and I am thankful for everything that you have done to allow me to accomplish so much.
- To my brother and sister, I thank you both for always believing in me. Without your support this would not have been possible.
- I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Doret Botha, for your patience, dedication and work ethic throughout this endeavour. I will be forever indebted to you for the professional guidance and insight you provided throughout this project.
- I would also like to thank Prof. Suria Ellis of the Statistical Consultation Services at the NWU for her assistance in the processing of the data collected and reviewing the analysis and interpretation of the empirical results of the quantitative phase of the study.
- I would like to thank the Bergen Bullying Research Group for allowing the use of the Negative Acts Questionnaire.
- To my fiancé, Simone Farrell and my best friend Rhyno van der Schyff, thank you for your patience support and understanding throughout the project.
- A special thank you to all the participants and respondents that took part in the study, for your contributions through your inputs and comments. Without your participation this research endeavour would not have been possible.

## ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying is an increasing phenomenon and occurs across organisations and occupations in the world of work, on a global scale. Bullying in the workplace is not just limited to corporate entities, it is also evident in higher education institutions where academic and support staff is also susceptible to workplace bullying. Workplace bullying negatively influences employees and may result in serious physical and psychological health problems. Workplace bullying also affects the organisation and influences productivity, work performance, employee engagement, employee loyalty and commitment, staff turnover and workplace culture, among other things.

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa. In order to achieve this objective successfully, the researcher conducted a literature review as well as an empirical study.

A literature review was conducted first to gain a conceptual and theoretical understanding of workplace bullying, as well as the factors that influence the phenomenon. The literature review also provided insight into legislative response and intervention measures that can be used in order to combat workplace bullying effectively and successfully.

For the empirical study, a pragmatic worldview was adopted. A mixed method research design was employed using quantitative and qualitative research approaches, methods and techniques. The research setting was limited to one higher education institution; a case study was conducted. For the quantitative phase of the study, the target population comprised all academic and support staff of the higher education institution under investigation. Convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. Data were collected using a web-based survey. Confirmatory factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis, descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank-order correlations, independent sample t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to analyse the data. For the qualitative phase of the study, the target population included the deans and deputy deans of faculties, school directors, People and Culture representatives, and campus health and wellness representatives. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews; an interview schedule was used. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

From the quantitative results it became evident that, in the higher education institution under investigation, workplace bullying was experienced to a certain extent (between "never", "now and then" and "monthly"). The respondents were the most subjected to exclusion, followed by

managerial misconduct, humiliation and belittlement, and hostility (the least). The results also revealed that there is ample room for improvement in terms of the institution's policies and practices aimed at combatting and counteracting workplace bullying at the institution. The qualitative findings revealed nine main themes: experiences of bullying behaviour, reporting of bullying behaviour, action taken against bullying incidents, seriousness of bullying incidents, anti-bullying policy, employee awareness of advisory facilities, managing workplace bullying, prevention measures for workplace bullying and intervention measures for workplace bullying. The empirical results and findings of this study were to a great extent supported by the findings of the literature review.

From the quantitative results and qualitative findings, it is evident that workplace bullying is present, and has been experienced, at the institution under investigation. Although policies and practices on this matter are in place at the institution to a certain extent, much more can be done to implement them effectively and to create awareness of workplace bullying, the procedures to follow to report bullying incidents and supporting practices available to support the victims. Furthermore, there is a need for primary, secondary and tertiary intervention measures to counter workplace bullying effectively and timely.

**Keywords:** academic staff; higher education; intervention measures; legislative response; South Africa; support staff; university; workplace bullying

## OPSOMMING

Afknouery in die werksplek is 'n toenemende verskynsel en kom op 'n internasionale skaal oor organisasies en beroepe in die wêreld van werk voor. Afknouery in die werksplek is nie net tot korporatiewe entiteite beperk nie, maar kom ook in hoërondewysinstellings voor, waar akademiese en steunpersoneel ook aan afknouery in die werksplek blootgestel word. Afknouery in die werksplek het 'n negatiewe invloed op werknemers en kan tot ernstige fisiese en sielkundige gesondheidsprobleme lei. Afknouery in die werksplek het ook 'n impak op die organisasie en beïnvloed onder andere produktiwiteit, werksprestasie, werknemers se betrokkenheid, werknemers se lojaliteit en toewyding, personeelomset en werksplekkultuur.

Hierdie studie het ten doel gehad om die persepsies van afknouery in die werksplek onder akademiese en steunpersoneel by 'n hoërondewysinstelling in Suid-Afrika te ondersoek. 'n Literatuurstudie asook 'n empiriese studie is uitgevoer ten einde hierdie doelstelling te bereik.

'n Literatuurstudie is eerste uitgevoer om konseptuele en teoretiese begrip van afknouery in die werksplek asook die faktore wat die verskynsel beïnvloed, te verkry. Die literatuuroorsig het ook insig in wetgewende reaksie- en intervensiemaatreëls gebied, wat gebruik kan word om afknouery in die werksplek doeltreffend en suksesvol te bekamp.

'n Pragmatiese wêreldbeskouing is vir die empiriese studie aangeneem. 'n Gemengdemetode-navorsingsontwerp is gebruik aan die hand van kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenaderings, -metodes en -tegnieke. Die navorsingsomgewing is beperk tot een hoërondewysinstelling, en 'n gevallestudie is uitgevoer. Die teikenpopulasie vir die kwantitatiewe fase van die studie het alle akademiese en steunpersoneel van die hoërondewysinstelling ingesluit. Gerieflikheidsteekproefneming is gebruik om die respondente te kies. Data is deur 'n webgebaseerde opname ingesamel. Bevestigende faktoranalise, verkennende faktoranalise, beskrywende statistiek, Spearman se rangordekorrelasies, onafhanklikesteekproef-t-toetse en variansie-analise (ANOVA) toetse is gebruik om die data te ontleed. Die teikenpopulasie vir die kwalitatiewe fase van die studie het die dekanes en adjunkdekanes van fakulteite, skooldirekteure, verteenwoordigers van Mense en Kultuur, en verteenwoordigers van kampusgesondheid en -welsyn ingesluit. Doelgerigte steekproefneming is gebruik om die deelnemers te kies. Data is deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude ingesamel, en 'n onderhoudskedule is gebruik. Tematiese analise is gebruik om die data te ontleed.

Uit die kwantitatiewe resultate was dit duidelik dat afknouery in die werksplek by die hoërondewysinstelling wat ondersoek is in 'n sekere mate (tussen “nooit”, “nou en dan” en “maandeliks”) ervaar is. Die respondente is die meeste aan uitsluiting onderwerp, gevolg deur bestuurswangedrag, vernedering en verkleinerings, en vyandigheid (die minste). Die resultate het voorts getoon dat daar baie ruimte vir verbetering is ten opsigte van die instelling se beleide en praktyke gemik op die bekamping en teëwerking van afknouery by die werksplek. Die kwalitatiewe bevindings het nege hooftemas opgelewer: ervarings van afknouende gedrag, rapportering van afknouende gedrag, optrede teen insidente van afknouery, erns van insidente van afknouery, anti-afknouerybeleid, werknemers se bewustheid van raadgewingsfasiliteite, die bestuur van afknouery in die werksplek, voorkomingsmaatreëls vir afknouery in die werksplek en intervensiemaatreëls vir afknouery in die werksplek. Die bevindings van hierdie studie is in 'n groot mate deur die bevindings van die literatuuroorsig ondersteun.

Uit die kwantitatiewe resultate en kwalitatiewe bevindings is dit duidelik dat afknouery by die werksplek teenwoordig en ervaar is by die instelling wat ondersoek is. Alhoewel daar in 'n mate beleide en praktyke daarvoor by die instelling is, kan baie meer gedoen word om dit doeltreffend te implementeer en om bewustheid van afknouery by die werksplek, die prosedures wat gevolg moet word om insidente van afknouery te rapporteer en die steunpraktyke wat beskikbaar is om slagoffers te ondersteun, te skep. Daar is voorts ook 'n behoefte aan primêre, sekondêre en tersiêre intervensiemaatreëls om afknouery by die werksplek doeltreffend en tydig teë te werk.

**Sleutelwoorde:** afknouery by die werksplek; akademiese personeel; hoërondewysinstelling; intervensiemaatreëls; steunpersoneel; Suid-Afrika; universiteit; wetgewende reaksie.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| DECLARATION .....                                                              | ii   |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....                                                          | iii  |
| ABSTRACT .....                                                                 | iv   |
| OPSOMMING .....                                                                | vi   |
| LIST OF TABLES.....                                                            | xiv  |
| LIST OF FIGURES .....                                                          | xv   |
| LIST OF ANNEXURES.....                                                         | xvi  |
| LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....                                        | xvii |
| CHAPTER 1 .....                                                                | 1    |
| INTRODUCTION, ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH<br>METHODOLOGY ..... | 1    |
| 1.1 INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION .....                             | 1    |
| 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....                                                    | 6    |
| 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....                                                    | 7    |
| 1.3.1 <i>General research question</i> .....                                   | 8    |
| 1.3.2 <i>Specific research questions</i> .....                                 | 8    |
| 1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....                                                  | 8    |
| 1.4.1 <i>General research objective</i> .....                                  | 8    |
| 1.4.2 <i>Specific research objectives</i> .....                                | 8    |
| 1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENTS .....                                       | 9    |
| 1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....                                                 | 12   |
| 1.6.1 <i>Literature review</i> .....                                           | 14   |
| 1.6.2 <i>Empirical investigation</i> .....                                     | 14   |
| 1.6.2.1 Research design.....                                                   | 15   |
| 1.6.2.2 Research setting.....                                                  | 15   |
| 1.6.2.3 Sampling .....                                                         | 16   |
| 1.6.2.4 Data collection .....                                                  | 16   |

|           |                                                                                   |    |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1.6.2.5   | Data analysis .....                                                               | 18 |
| 1.7       | ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....                                                      | 22 |
| 1.8       | LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....                                                    | 23 |
| 1.9       | THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....                                               | 23 |
| 1.10      | CHAPTER LAYOUT .....                                                              | 24 |
| 1.11      | CONCLUSION .....                                                                  | 25 |
| CHAPTER 2 | .....                                                                             | 26 |
|           | WORKPLACE BULLYING: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW .....                                  | 26 |
| 2.1       | INTRODUCTION .....                                                                | 26 |
| 2.2       | DEFINING AND CONCEPTUALISING WORKPLACE BULLYING AND<br>RELATED KEY CONCEPTS ..... | 26 |
| 2.3       | THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO WORKPLACE BULLYING .....                                | 28 |
| 2.3.1     | <i>The Leymann model</i> .....                                                    | 28 |
| 2.3.2     | <i>Tajfel's social identity theory</i> .....                                      | 33 |
| 2.3.3     | <i>The conflict escalation model of Glasl</i> .....                               | 36 |
| 2.3.4     | <i>Psychosocial safety climate theory</i> .....                                   | 40 |
| 2.4       | FORMS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING .....                                                 | 45 |
| 2.5       | CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERPETRATOR AND THE TARGET .....                           | 49 |
| 2.5.1     | <i>Characteristics of the perpetrator</i> .....                                   | 49 |
| 2.5.2     | <i>Characteristics of the target</i> .....                                        | 51 |
| 2.6       | ANTECEDENTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING .....                                           | 52 |
| 2.6.1     | <i>Job demands</i> .....                                                          | 52 |
| 2.6.2     | <i>Management and leadership styles of supervisors</i> .....                      | 53 |
| 2.6.3     | <i>Lack of adaptation to change</i> .....                                         | 53 |
| 2.6.4     | <i>Interpersonal conflict</i> .....                                               | 54 |
| 2.7       | EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING .....                                               | 55 |
| 2.8       | PREVALENCE OF WORKPLACE BULLYING: A GLOBAL AND<br>NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE .....      | 59 |
| 2.8.1     | <i>A global perspective</i> .....                                                 | 59 |
| 2.8.2     | <i>A national perspective</i> .....                                               | 61 |

|                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.9                                                                                    | WORKPLACE BULLYING IN HIGHER EDUCATION .....                                                                                   | 63 |
| 2.10                                                                                   | SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ..                                                                           | 66 |
| 2.10.1                                                                                 | <i>Gender and workplace bullying .....</i>                                                                                     | 66 |
| 2.10.2                                                                                 | <i>Age and workplace bullying .....</i>                                                                                        | 67 |
| 2.10.3                                                                                 | <i>Marital status and workplace bullying .....</i>                                                                             | 68 |
| 2.10.4                                                                                 | <i>Level of education and workplace bullying .....</i>                                                                         | 69 |
| 2.10.5                                                                                 | <i>Length of employment and workplace bullying .....</i>                                                                       | 70 |
| 2.10.6                                                                                 | <i>Type of employment and workplace bullying .....</i>                                                                         | 71 |
| 2.11                                                                                   | CHAPTER SUMMARY .....                                                                                                          | 71 |
| CHAPTER 3                                                                              | .....                                                                                                                          | 76 |
| COMBATting WORKPLACE BULLYING: LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE AND<br>INTERVENTION MEASURES ..... |                                                                                                                                | 76 |
| 3.1                                                                                    | INTRODUCTION .....                                                                                                             | 76 |
| 3.2                                                                                    | THE STATUTORY AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES ON WORKPLACE<br>BULLYING IN SOUTH AFRICA .....                                            | 76 |
| 3.2.1                                                                                  | <i>The role of the International Labour Organization .....</i>                                                                 | 77 |
| 3.2.2                                                                                  | <i>The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) .....</i>                                                           | 79 |
| 3.2.3                                                                                  | <i>The Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995) .....</i>                                                                             | 82 |
| 3.2.4                                                                                  | <i>The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (75 of 1997) .....</i>                                                               | 83 |
| 3.2.5                                                                                  | <i>The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) .....</i>                                                                            | 84 |
| 3.2.6                                                                                  | <i>The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (130 of<br/>1993) .....</i>                                     | 85 |
| 3.2.7                                                                                  | <i>The Unemployment Insurance Act (63 of 2001) .....</i>                                                                       | 86 |
| 3.2.8                                                                                  | <i>The Occupational Health and Safety Act (85 of 1993) .....</i>                                                               | 87 |
| 3.2.9                                                                                  | <i>The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination<br/>Act (4 of 2000) .....</i>                             | 88 |
| 3.2.10                                                                                 | <i>Draft Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of<br/>Violence and Harassment in the World of Work .....</i> | 89 |
| 3.3                                                                                    | INTERVENTIONS IN WORKPLACE BULLYING .....                                                                                      | 92 |
| 3.3.1                                                                                  | <i>Primary interventions .....</i>                                                                                             | 93 |
| 3.3.1.1                                                                                | Establishing an anti-bullying culture .....                                                                                    | 94 |
| 3.3.1.2                                                                                | Redesigning the working environment .....                                                                                      | 96 |
| 3.3.1.3                                                                                | Conflict management and resolution systems .....                                                                               | 97 |

|                                                       |                                                                                                    |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 3.3.1.4                                               | Changes in leadership and leadership behaviour .....                                               | 98         |
| 3.3.1.5                                               | Anti-bullying policies .....                                                                       | 100        |
| 3.3.1.6                                               | Raising awareness of bullying and its consequences .....                                           | 101        |
| 3.3.1.7                                               | Staff selection system .....                                                                       | 102        |
| 3.3.1.8                                               | Surveillance .....                                                                                 | 103        |
| <b>3.3.2</b>                                          | <b><i>Secondary interventions</i> .....</b>                                                        | <b>103</b> |
| 3.3.2.1                                               | Informal interventions .....                                                                       | 103        |
| 3.3.2.2                                               | Formal interventions .....                                                                         | 107        |
| <b>3.3.3</b>                                          | <b><i>Tertiary interventions</i> .....</b>                                                         | <b>109</b> |
| 3.3.3.1                                               | Counselling and debriefing .....                                                                   | 110        |
| 3.3.3.2                                               | Integrated counselling programmes .....                                                            | 110        |
| 3.3.3.3                                               | Inpatient treatment .....                                                                          | 111        |
| 3.3.3.4                                               | Physiotherapy and physical exercise .....                                                          | 111        |
| <b>3.4</b>                                            | <b>CONCLUSION .....</b>                                                                            | <b>112</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER 4</b>                                      | <b>.....</b>                                                                                       | <b>114</b> |
| <b>EMPIRICAL RESULTS, FINDINGS AND ANALYSES .....</b> |                                                                                                    | <b>114</b> |
| <b>4.1</b>                                            | <b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>                                                                          | <b>114</b> |
| <b>4.2</b>                                            | <b>EXPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>                                                | <b>114</b> |
| <b>4.2.1</b>                                          | <b><i>Quantitative phase</i> .....</b>                                                             | <b>114</b> |
| <b>4.2.2</b>                                          | <b><i>Qualitative phase</i> .....</b>                                                              | <b>119</b> |
| <b>4.3</b>                                            | <b>EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA ..</b>                                      | <b>120</b> |
| <b>4.3.1</b>                                          | <b><i>Biographical information</i> .....</b>                                                       | <b>121</b> |
| 4.3.1.1                                               | Gender .....                                                                                       | 123        |
| 4.3.1.2                                               | Campus .....                                                                                       | 123        |
| 4.3.1.3                                               | Age .....                                                                                          | 123        |
| 4.3.1.4                                               | Marital status .....                                                                               | 124        |
| 4.3.1.5                                               | Highest qualification .....                                                                        | 124        |
| 4.3.1.6                                               | Length of employment .....                                                                         | 124        |
| 4.3.1.7                                               | Nature of employment .....                                                                         | 124        |
| 4.3.1.8                                               | Employment contracts .....                                                                         | 125        |
| <b>4.3.2</b>                                          | <b><i>Workplace bullying</i> .....</b>                                                             | <b>125</b> |
| 4.3.2.1                                               | Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying .....                                                 | 125        |
| 4.3.2.2                                               | Reliability and confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model for workplace bullying ..... | 128        |

|              |                                                                                                                          |            |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4.3.2.3      | Exploratory factor analysis of workplace bullying .....                                                                  | 132        |
| 4.3.2.4      | Confirmatory factor analysis of the four-factor workplace bullying model .....                                           | 136        |
| <b>4.3.3</b> | <b><i>Policies and practices .....</i></b>                                                                               | <b>140</b> |
| 4.3.3.1      | Descriptive statistics of policies and practices.....                                                                    | 140        |
| 4.3.3.2      | Exploratory factor analysis of policies and practices .....                                                              | 143        |
| <b>4.3.4</b> | <b><i>Effect of nominal biographical variables on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....</i></b>            | <b>150</b> |
| 4.3.4.1      | Effect of gender on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                                  | 150        |
| 4.3.4.2      | Effect of nature of employment on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                    | 152        |
| 4.3.4.3      | Effect of nature of employment contract on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                           | 154        |
| 4.3.4.4      | Effect of nature of campus on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                        | 156        |
| 4.3.4.5      | Effect of marital status on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                          | 159        |
| <b>4.3.5</b> | <b><i>Correlations between ordinal biographical variables and workplace bullying and policies and practices.....</i></b> | <b>163</b> |
| <b>4.3.6</b> | <b><i>Correlations between workplace bullying and policies and practices .....</i></b>                                   | <b>166</b> |
| 4.3.6.1      | Correlations between workplace bullying factors.....                                                                     | 170        |
| 4.3.6.2      | Correlations between policies and practices factors.....                                                                 | 170        |
| 4.3.6.3      | Correlations between workplace bullying factors and policies and practices factors.....                                  | 171        |
| <b>4.4</b>   | <b>EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSES OF QUALITATIVE DATA ...</b>                                                           | <b>172</b> |
| <b>4.4.1</b> | <b><i>Experiences of bullying behaviour.....</i></b>                                                                     | <b>174</b> |
| <b>4.4.2</b> | <b><i>Reporting of bullying behaviour.....</i></b>                                                                       | <b>175</b> |
| <b>4.4.3</b> | <b><i>Action taken against bullying incidents.....</i></b>                                                               | <b>176</b> |
| <b>4.4.4</b> | <b><i>Seriousness of bullying incidents .....</i></b>                                                                    | <b>177</b> |
| <b>4.4.5</b> | <b><i>Anti-bullying policy .....</i></b>                                                                                 | <b>179</b> |
| <b>4.4.6</b> | <b><i>Employee awareness of advisory facilities.....</i></b>                                                             | <b>180</b> |
| <b>4.4.7</b> | <b><i>Managing workplace bullying .....</i></b>                                                                          | <b>181</b> |
| <b>4.4.8</b> | <b><i>Prevention measures for workplace bullying .....</i></b>                                                           | <b>182</b> |
| <b>4.4.9</b> | <b><i>Intervention measures for workplace bullying .....</i></b>                                                         | <b>183</b> |
| <b>4.5</b>   | <b>DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY .....</b>                            | <b>184</b> |

|                                       |                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 4.5.1                                 | <i>Quantitative phase</i> .....   | 184 |
| 4.5.2                                 | <i>Qualitative phase</i> .....    | 191 |
| 4.6                                   | CONCLUSION .....                  | 197 |
| CHAPTER 5                             | .....                             | 199 |
| CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... |                                   | 199 |
| 5.1                                   | INTRODUCTION .....                | 199 |
| 5.2                                   | RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....         | 199 |
| 5.2.1                                 | <i>Research methodology</i> ..... | 200 |
| 5.2.2                                 | <i>Research objective 1</i> ..... | 202 |
| 5.2.3                                 | <i>Research objective 2</i> ..... | 204 |
| 5.2.4                                 | <i>Research objective 3</i> ..... | 206 |
| 5.2.5                                 | <i>Research objective 4</i> ..... | 207 |
| 5.3                                   | AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH .....    | 210 |
| 5.4                                   | SUMMARY OF THE STUDY .....        | 211 |
| LIST OF SOURCES.....                  |                                   | 213 |
| ANNEXURES                             | .....                             | 249 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|             |                                                                                                                                            |     |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 3.1:  | Primary, secondary and tertiary interventions in workplace bullying.....                                                                   | 92  |
| Table 4.1:  | Biographical information .....                                                                                                             | 121 |
| Table 4.2:  | Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying.....                                                                                          | 126 |
| Table 4.3:  | Goodness-of-model-fit indices .....                                                                                                        | 130 |
| Table 4.4:  | Reliability statistics of the measurement model.....                                                                                       | 131 |
| Table 4.5:  | Descriptive statistics of the measurement model .....                                                                                      | 131 |
| Table 4.6:  | KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity .....                                                                                                | 132 |
| Table 4.7:  | Total variance explained .....                                                                                                             | 133 |
| Table 4.8:  | Pattern matrix <sup>a</sup> .....                                                                                                          | 134 |
| Table 4.9:  | Goodness-of-model-fit indices .....                                                                                                        | 138 |
| Table 4.10: | Reliability statistics of workplace bullying .....                                                                                         | 139 |
| Table 4.11: | Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying.....                                                                                          | 139 |
| Table 4.12: | Descriptive statistics of policies and practices.....                                                                                      | 140 |
| Table 4.13: | KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity .....                                                                                                | 143 |
| Table 4.14: | Total variance explained .....                                                                                                             | 143 |
| Table 4.15: | Pattern matrix <sup>a</sup> .....                                                                                                          | 145 |
| Table 4.16: | Reliability statistics of policies and practices .....                                                                                     | 149 |
| Table 4.17: | Descriptive statistics of policies and practices.....                                                                                      | 150 |
| Table 4.18: | Effect of gender on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                                                    | 151 |
| Table 4.19: | Effect of nature of employment on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                                      | 152 |
| Table 4.20: | Effect of nature of employment contract on workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                             | 154 |
| Table 4.21: | Effect of campus on workplace bullying and policies and practices.....                                                                     | 157 |
| Table 4.22: | Effect of marital status on workplace bullying and policies and practices.....                                                             | 159 |
| Table 4.23: | Correlation between age, highest qualification and years working at the university with workplace bullying and policies and practices..... | 163 |
| Table 4.24: | Correlation between workplace bullying and policies and practices .....                                                                    | 167 |
| Table 4.25: | Interview responses.....                                                                                                                   | 173 |
| Table 4.26: | Themes and the relation with the questions asked in the interview schedules (questionnaires) .....                                         | 173 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|             |                                                                                                                                                 |     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 2.1: | Glasl's model of conflict escalation and conflict management practices ...                                                                      | 37  |
| Figure 4.1: | Confirmatory factor analysis results for the measurement model with<br>standardised regression weights and correlations.....                    | 129 |
| Figure 4.2: | Confirmatory factor analysis results for the four-factor workplace bullying<br>model with standardised regression weights and correlations..... | 137 |

## **LIST OF ANNEXURES**

|                    |                                                                                                        |            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Annexure A:</b> | <b>Permission from Bergen Bullying Research Group to use the<br/>Negative Acts Questionnaire .....</b> | <b>249</b> |
| <b>Annexure B:</b> | <b>Online questionnaire invitation and informed consent form.....</b>                                  | <b>250</b> |
| <b>Annexure C:</b> | <b>Online questionnaire .....</b>                                                                      | <b>251</b> |
| <b>Annexure D:</b> | <b>Invitation email to take part in online interviews .....</b>                                        | <b>258</b> |
| <b>Annexure E:</b> | <b>Informed consent form for taking part in online interviews .....</b>                                | <b>260</b> |
| <b>Annexure F:</b> | <b>Interview schedule: Deans, deputy deans and school directors.....</b>                               | <b>263</b> |
| <b>Annexure G:</b> | <b>Interview schedule: People and Culture representative .....</b>                                     | <b>266</b> |

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|         |                                                                   |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ANOVA   | Analysis of variance                                              |
| BCEA    | Basic Conditions of Employment Act                                |
| CCMA    | Commission of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration             |
| CFI     | Comparative Fit Index                                             |
| CMIN/DF | Chi-square Statistic Divided by Degrees of Freedom                |
| COIDA   | Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act           |
| EEA     | Employment Equity Act                                             |
| IBA     | International Bar Association                                     |
| ILO     | International Labour Organization                                 |
| KMO     | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin                                                |
| LRA     | Labour Relations Act                                              |
| NAQ     | Negative Acts Questionnaire                                       |
| NWU     | North-West University                                             |
| OHSA    | Occupational Health and Safety Act                                |
| PEPUDA  | Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act |
| POS     | Perceived organisational support                                  |
| PSC     | Psychosocial safety climate                                       |
| RMSEA   | Root mean square error of approximation                           |
| SPSS    | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences                       |
| UIA     | Unemployment Insurance Act                                        |
| UK      | United Kingdom                                                    |
| USA     | United States of America                                          |

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

This study investigated the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff at a higher education institution in South Africa. Workplace bullying is a common occurrence in organisations (Hauge *et al.*, 2010:426). Scholars such as Yamada (2010:468) state that the workplace bullying problem stretches from France, Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK) to places such as the United States of America (USA) and the European Union; South Africa is no exception (Department of Labour, 2010). Workplace bullying is the act of one individual, organisation or even groups of individuals targeting another individual in the workplace through negative and aggressive behaviour that can cause degradation of the employee's mental and physical health (Madan, 2014:1742). Workplace bullying is also referred to as 'mobbing' by scholars such as Keashly and Neuman (2010:50) and as 'harassment' by scholars such as Einarsen *et al.* (2011:5). In different countries across the world, the concept of workplace bullying is often used interchangeably with the terms 'mobbing' and 'harassment'. According to Branch *et al.* (2013:280), workplace bullying is most consistently used to describe bullying behaviour in the working environment. Therefore, for the remainder of this dissertation, the term 'workplace bullying' is used to refer to bullying behaviour in the working environment.

Workplace bullying is identified through repeated negative acts directed at a specific individual or groups of individuals that are unwanted and negative in nature (Langos, 2012:285). According to Langos (2012:285), negative acts can be considered as snarly comments, unnecessary sarcasm, mockery, belittling, etc. Other negative acts can also include the physical harm of the individual being targeted, the introduction of impossible target expectations and extreme forms of observation of work that may cause unnecessary stress (Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29). These negative acts must occur repeatedly over a set period in order for it to be considered workplace bullying (Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29).

On the other hand, harassment is an act that is defined legally as the unwanted verbal or physical behaviour that humiliates or offends an individual (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2013;

Smit, 2014:251). Such acts include the following: intimidation, discrimination based on prohibited grounds, threats and unwelcomed physical contact. An act of harassment can only be considered as such when the target is a person whose status (religion, gender, race) is protected by law (Branch *et al.*, 2013:281; Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2013; Smit, 2014:252). Bullying or mobbing is inherently an act that is long-standing and has a longer duration than other acts such as harassment (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:50; Westhues, 2004). Duffy and Sperry (2014:1) regard workplace mobbing, bullying or harassment as a social process that is destructive. This social process is one in which groups, individuals or organisations target a specific person in order to humiliate and ridicule the individual to such a point where he/she is forced to leave the workplace (Duffy & Sperry, 2014:1).

Workplace bullying has a negative impact on employees as well as organisations. Being a victim of bullying may cause serious physical and psychological health problems. The physical harm that may befall employees can range from heart or cardiovascular diseases to musculoskeletal diseases, including shaking, insomnia, blood pressure problems, heart palpitations and stomach problems (Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29; Langos, 2012:285; Miller *et al.*, 2012:53). Psychological issues include lack of enthusiasm, low self-esteem, inability to concentrate, loss of motivation (Smit, 2014:67), depression, excessive fear, forgetfulness, panic attacks, insecurities, suicide and thoughts of suicide (Momborg, 2011:86–89). According to Leach *et al.* (2017:3), suicidal thoughts due to workplace bullying is a common occurrence among employees. The link between workplace bullying and suicidal tendencies is becoming more prevalent, as victims feel that there is no way out and no one to turn to for help (Leach *et al.*, 2017:4). Suicidal tendencies are not something that happens overnight and take some time to manifest in the psyche of those experiencing it. Continuous targeting of an individual may result in suicide (Leach *et al.*, 2017:3; Momborg, 2011:89).

People who are bullied to such an extent that they feel there is no possible way of escaping the bullying may eventually experience a psychosomatic breakdown (Bristow, 2016). This means that emotionally they will have difficulty acting out their operational duties. Employees of an organisation are contractually obligated to perform certain tasks as per their job description, and if these tasks are not completed, it may lead to employees losing their jobs (Rodríguez-Muñoz *et al.*, 2009:225).

Workplace bullying also affects the organisation, not only on an organisational level, but on a production level as well (Madan, 2014:1742). Workplace bullying has an influence on management and leadership styles, workplace culture, ethnic climate, situational factors and organisational factors (Hoel *et al.*, 2010:454; Madan, 2014:1742; Samnani & Singh, 2012:581; Vie *et al.*, 2011:37; Wheeler *et al.*, 2010:553). If not addressed effectively, bullying behaviour can escalate and become a problem for the organisation, which could lead not only to a reduction in productivity, but ultimately also to the collapse of the entire organisational structure and in some instances the closing down of organisations as a whole (Burke & Mouton, 2013:5; Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29; Law *et al.*, 2011:1782; Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). Therefore, it is essential for an organisation to have effective intervention and prevention strategies and policies in place to combat this problem in the workplace (Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29; Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11).

Workplace bullies often use the tactic of fearlessness to instil fear in those they are bullying and, in so doing, discourage employees from engaging in the workplace (Bristow, 2016; Burke & Mouton, 2013:1). Employee engagement is seen as the ability and willingness of an employee to take part in the activities of the organisation (Madan, 2014:1742). Employee engagement in the workplace has two core dimensions: vigour and dedication (Rodríguez-Muñoz *et al.*, 2009:225). Vigour is associated with mental resilience and high levels of energy, persistence in the face of difficulties and willingness to invest in one's work. Dedication is characterised by, among other things, a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride. When employees engage in the manner dictated by their employee contract, it benefits the organisation in so far as production is increased and an optimal working environment and culture are bred (Berthelsen *et al.*, 2011:178). When employees become disengaged due to stress, loss in the family or workplace bullying, the organisational culture and environment are put under strain (Berthelsen *et al.*, 2011:178).

According to Adera (2017), people who decide to enact bullying attitudes and acts in the workplace have often been bullied themselves, are being bullied at the time or have a need to exert control over others less powerful than them. Giorgi (2012:262) makes a distinction between the conscious and sub-conscious bully, namely the bully who decides to bully and the bully who does not even know he/she is being a bully. The sub-conscious bully will use methods such as impossible deadlines, unreachable targets and unimaginable workloads without realising that it is to the detriment of the employee (Giorgi, 2012:262). The conscious bully, on the other hand, makes a conscious decision to target specific individuals by scolding them publicly, screaming at

them, making fun of them, etc. (Adera, 2017; Giorgi, 2012:262; Leach *et al.*, 2017:3; Momberg, 2011:89). The authors do however conclude that workplace bullying has become one of the biggest workplace problems in organisations, and that antecedence of the problem is of great importance.

The act of workplace bullying is not confined to those who are directly affected by the act or situation. Bystanders are also influenced by the act of workplace bullying in a negative manner. This can be seen in the negative change in workplace culture and ethnic climate (Hauge *et al.*, 2010:426; Hoel *et al.*, 2010:454). When this happens, those indirectly involved in the moment of workplace bullying spread rumours and escalate the situation to such a point where others become uncomfortable in their workplace environment. The situation can then escalate to such a point where sides are being picked, which can then influence the workplace culture to such an extent that people avoid one another or even the organisation all together (Hauge *et al.*, 2010:426; Hoel *et al.*, 2010:454). These situational and organisational factors can lead to a ripple effect among employees. The ripple effect caused by workplace bullying can then flow over to other departments and before long, one incident can affect a large portion of the organisational workforce to act in a negative way (Hoel *et al.*, 2010:454; Samnani & Singh, 2012:581; Vie *et al.*, 2011:37; Wheeler *et al.*, 2010:553).

Bullying in the workplace is not just limited to corporate entities; it is also applicable to higher education institutions (Washington, 2014:1). In the arena of higher education, lecturers and other university staff are also susceptible to workplace bullying. Workplace bullying can occur between support staff (such as cleaners or repair staff) and lecturers. Workplace bullying can also occur when the employer or manager bullies support staff or lecturers. Although it was not the focus of this particular study, it should be mentioned that lecturers and university staff are also in danger of being bullied by the students who attend the university (Zabrodska *et al.*, 2011:710). Bullying behaviour can lead to the expulsion of staff by their heads of departments. Bullying behaviour can have serious repercussions for the institution by which they are employed (Washington, 2014:1). The institution can become known for the bullying culture being prevalent in the workplace. This can lead to employees becoming discouraged to do their work; some employees may leave the company and new employees would be less inclined to seek out the institution as a new working environment (Zabrodska *et al.*, 2011:710).

As already mentioned above, workplace bullying can affect employees to such a degree that they no longer have the innate ability to perform the task with which they were entrusted. According to Hollis (2015:1), the situation is no different at institutions of higher education. When employees are unable to do the work that has been assigned to them, whether the reason is workplace bullying or something else, such employees run the risk of losing their jobs. Workplace bullying negatively impacts the productivity of the company or institution, and when management looks at productivity, they see failure of employees as the reason and not workplace bullying (Hollis, 2015:1–2). Workplace bullying can also lead to employees becoming disconnected from their work due to the inability to perform their work obligations and tasks.

In many countries, there is no law that states that workplace bullying is illegal; furthermore, there is no law that regulates the act of workplace bullying in the workplace environment (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015). According to Smit (2014:251), the act itself is governed in such a way that the singular act is considered to be a violation, but not against the law. Furthermore, Smit (2014:251) states that countries such as Sweden see the act as victimisation; the USA as discrimination, but only on protected grounds (race, religion, etc.); and the UK as legislation that prohibits the act, to name but a few. According to Momberg (cited by De Wet & Jacobs, 2013:447), the labour law that governs workplace bullying in South Africa has its own shortcomings when dealing with the workplace issue, the reason being that the labour law of South Africa sees bullying in the workplace as unfair discrimination (Department of Labour, 2010). According to Smit (2015:5), although bullying is a form of unfair discrimination in terms of the labour law of South Africa, there is little progress in the prevention of the act itself.

Therefore, effective human resource policies need to be put in place in order to ensure that employees are protected from the possibility of being bullied by their managers, senior executives, senior management, other employees from the same department, etc. (Burke & Mouton, 2013:1). Implementation and operationalisation of policies are of utmost importance to ensure that employees are protected and that they understand how to deal with bullying in the workplace through organisational structures and processes (Salin, 2008b:222). These policies can never be stagnant and need to be updated routinely (Law *et al.*, 2011:1782). Furthermore, prevention and intervention measures are used by organisations and institutions in order to counter workplace bullying. Intervention and prevention measures hold value in so far as they are the first lines of defence for those being bullied publicly by an assailant known and those being bullied privately by an assailant unknown or protected by anonymity (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:38). Prevention

and intervention measures are at the root of fighting workplace bullying within the confines of the workplace (Law *et al.*, 2011:1782).

Given the above, this study aimed to investigate the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

From the foregoing background, it is evident that workplace bullying can have detrimental effects on the physical and emotional well-being of employees (Langos, 2012; Smit, 2014). Possible consequences may include a decrease in productivity, lowered self-esteem or obliteration thereof, the willingness to quit in order to get away from the harassment and tendencies towards depression and self-harm (Crosslin & Golman, 2014:14; Langos, 2012:285). On an organisational level, workplace bullying is negatively linked to organisational commitment, team cohesion, creativity, organisational performance, job satisfaction and employee engagement (Adera, 2017:5). Furthermore, the management and leadership styles, workplace culture, ethical climate, situational factors and organisational factors can also be influenced negatively (Hauge *et al.*, 2010:426; Samnani & Singh, 2012:581; Vie *et al.*, 2011:37; Wheeler *et al.*, 2010:553).

Higher education institutions are not excluded from workplace bullying. Individuals being bullied by their co-workers and managers in higher education institutions often need to burden the consequences of physical, emotional and psychological damage (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2013:324; Faucher *et al.*, 2015:111). The impact is not only on the individual, but on the group as well, and may result in destructive behaviour, interpersonal aggression and lack of cooperation (Faucher *et al.*, 2015:111).

When employees, including lecturers and support staff, are faced with bullying, the anti-authoritative nature of the act may lead to them being discouraged from reporting the incident (Davenport, 2014:16). The act of bullying is often not viewed as extreme enough, and as a result leads to everyday mental anguish that is unreported and hidden. Davenport (2014:16) argues that increasing numbers of educators are experiencing this harmful phenomenon and that educators lack the skills and knowledge to cope with or handle the act of bullying. The longer the problem is left unattended, the harder it becomes for organisations to identify, let alone address, the issue (Gilman, 2015:7). A problem such as workplace bullying can become stronger over time, because

bullies often believe that they can get away with what they are busy doing (Gilman, 2015:7). Due to the absence of policies and strategies or the ineffective implementation and operationalisation of policies and strategies, the problem never truly disappears and then reaches such a level that acts of bullying are seen as the norm, rather than frowned upon (Davenport, 2014:16).

Human resource policies are essential to protect employees and to keep them safe in the workplace (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:38). A gap often exists between intended and implemented human resource strategies and policies (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:38). Policies that are intended are not always implemented, the reason being that intended policies do not always work in the way they were proposed during the testing stage of said policies (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:38). Furthermore, there is a constant change in what is required from human resource policies to protect employees in an ever-changing working environment (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:38).

Without proper prevention and intervention measures in place, the employee of the institution or working environment becomes helpless against the effects of workplace bullying (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:38). If prevention and intervention measures do not protect the employee, it can lead to the targeted employee leaving the company or even committing suicide (Hollis, 2015:1).

Given the above, the problem under investigation is outlined along the following four points: Firstly, workplace bullying is a significant problem in the workplace and is not confined to a specific occupation or profession. Secondly, on an individual level, any form of workplace bullying has detrimental effects on the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of employees. Thirdly, on an organisational level, any form of workplace bullying can affect organisational performance in terms of creativity, output and innovation. Fourthly, organisations, including higher education institutions, do not often have the means to successfully address the issue of workplace bullying. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate workplace bullying among academic and support staff of a higher education institution in South Africa and proposes recommendations to be used and implemented by higher education institutions to address workplace bullying.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In relation to the introduction, orientation and problem statement, the following research questions were identified:

### **1.3.1      *General research question***

The general research question was as follows: What are the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa?

### **1.3.2      *Specific research questions***

From the general research question, the following specific research questions were posed:

- Which theoretical approaches and perspectives are relevant to workplace bullying and how can they contribute to creating better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation?
- Which measures can be used by management in higher education institutions to address the workplace bullying phenomenon adequately?
- What are the results of the empirical study on workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa and how can it be analysed?
- What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the literature review and empirical findings to assist higher education institutions to successfully address workplace bullying?

## **1.4          RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research objectives were divided into a general research objective and specific research objectives. These are stated below.

### **1.4.1      *General research objective***

The main research objective was to determine the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa.

### **1.4.2      *Specific research objectives***

From the general research objective, the following specific research objectives were identified:

- To analyse the theoretical approaches and perspectives that are linked to workplace bullying and to determine how they can contribute to creating a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation
- To identify relevant measures that can be used by management in higher education institutions to address the workplace bullying phenomenon adequately
- To document and analyse the results of the empirical study on workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa
- To draw up conclusions and recommendations emanating from the literature review and empirical findings to assist higher education institutions to successfully address workplace bullying.

## 1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENTS

Workplace bullying is one of the biggest problems faced by employees in terms of the way in which they are treated in the workplace (Nielsen *et al.*, 2010:957). In 2003, McAvoy and Murtagh (2003:776) indicated that workplace bullying has been estimated to affect up to at least 50% of the UK's workforce at some time during their lives as working individuals. The problem has been identified by McAvoy and Murtagh (2003:776) as one that is no longer secluded to specific organisations. In South Africa, the problem is as prominent as in any other country. According to a study by Cunliffe and Mostert (2012:2), approximately 77.8% of the South African workforce has experienced bullying in some way or form. According to Hollis (2017b:1), the phenomenon has grown exponentially in recent years, with a study showing that education and support staff are being bullied on a regular basis.

As indicated in the introduction and problem statement sections, the effect of workplace bullying on the employees of an organisation is detrimental both physically speaking and psychologically speaking (Burke & Mouton, 2013:5). On an individual level, some of the problems that may befall an employee being bullied in the workplace are stress, anxiety and physical health problems (heart palpitations, insomnia, eating disorders), and in severe cases, it may even lead to critical health problems such as a heart attack or a psychosomatic breakdown (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11).

On an organisational level, the impact of workplace bullying is just as detrimental to the organisation as the individual. When the employees of an organisation cannot work at full capacity, it is very easy for targets to fall short, production to go down and the workplace culture to shift in a negative way, and in some cases, workplace bullying can even lead to the workplace becoming an unsafe place (Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29). When workplace bullying becomes uncontrollable in the workplace, it can also lead to job dissatisfaction and even anger towards other individuals due to the harassment of employees (Nielsen *et al.*, 2010:957). According to Piotrowski (2012:44), the problem of workplace bullying can get so out of hand, on both an individual and an organisational level, that it can destroy the organisation.

Workplace bullying can be linked to an onslaught of theories that explain the presence of this phenomenon. Due to the complexity of bullying, more than one theoretical lens was required to help understand this phenomenon. The following theories were explored: the Leymann model, Tajfel's social identity theory, the conflict escalation model of Glasl and the psychosocial safety climate (PSC) theory.

The Leymann model, which was introduced by Leymann (1990:119–120; 1996:165) in the early 1990s, argues strongly against individual factors as antecedents of bullying, especially when related to issues of victim personality. Leymann (1990:119–120) regards organisational factors relating to leadership, work design and the morale of management and the workforce as the main factors. According to Leymann (1996:165), the following four factors are prominent in eliciting bullying behaviours at work: deficiencies in work design, deficiencies in leadership behaviour, the victim's socially exposed position and low departmental morale.

In terms of the Leymann model, it is important to understand the term 'mobbing', as used by Leymann (1996:168). Mobbing is defined as the social interaction in which one individual is attacked by one or more individuals daily or repeatedly over time. The act of mobbing places the person being attacked in a helpless and uncomfortable position (Leymann, 1996:168). According to Leymann (1996:168), mobbing takes place in the workplace environment in such a way that the relation between the bullied and those who bully warrants further investigation. The model allows for a better understanding of the way workplace bullying has affected employees in different organisations. Furthermore, the model strongly argues that organisational factors should be investigated as antecedents to workplace bullying, rather than individual factors. Therefore, through the understanding and discussion of organisational factors and conflict escalation, the

Leymann model provided the researcher with the fundamental underpinnings of workplace bullying.

Tajfel's social identity theory is based on the realisation that workplace bullying, and any form of bullying, is an interpersonal phenomenon that stems from a dynamic interaction between two or more parties (Einarsen *et al.*, 2004:13). Social identity theory focuses on how different individuals interact within the parameters of a social or workplace setting (Tajfel, 2010:2). Social identity must be understood as the part of individuals' self-concept that is derivable from their knowledge of social groups. Furthermore, it is the significance and value that they attach to membership of such groups that make up their social identity (Tajfel, 2010:3). According to Tajfel (2010:2), social identity theory is centred on the relationship between social groups and their conflicts and the role played in the conflict by the individuals who are part of the groups. Cunliff and Mostert (2012:2) state that the social demographics of individuals who take part in workplace bullying need to be considered, as they can shed light on why people bully others in the workplace. Social identity theory affords a clear understanding of the role players involved in workplace bullying.

Conflict in the workplace happens when there is a relationship, tangible and real, that includes more than one party or parties and that can turn into a situation that is negative and hostile in nature (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:425). Conflict is something that is difficult to avoid in a working environment because there will always be the prospect of its existence in interpersonal relationships (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:425). Conflict, if not dealt with in time, can escalate and lead to negative and even disastrous consequences for a company (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:426). In relation to the different levels of conflict escalation, different strategies for handling conflict, such as arbitration, good services, process consultation, judicial conflict solving, mediation, power intervention, etc., are required (Fisher, 1972; La Tour *et al.*, 1976). However, these strategies can only be implemented through the understanding of how conflict can escalate in the working environment. Glasl's (1982:119–120) model is based on the premise that both the stages of conflict (from the initial conflict to its conclusion) and the strategies to combat conflict are based on the intensity thereof. The intensity of conflict then dictates the strategies that will be used in order to resolve workplace conflict. For the study at hand, the model created by Glasl (1982:119) was used to understand the diversity of factors that play a role when investigating conflict in the workplace in order to be able to identify conflict, the way it escalates, the intensity it holds and the required strategies to be used to combat conflict in the workplace. As already indicated, the effects

of bullying on the employees of an organisation are detrimental, both physically and psychologically (Burke & Mouton, 2013:5).

PSC theory was explored because it provides a theoretical model by which to measure, monitor, evaluate and benchmark causes of work-related stress (on an individual and team level) within a single conceptual framework (Zadow *et al.*, 2019:31). A person can only take so much harassment before he/she breaks down. When looking at workplace bullying in terms of the psychosomatic impact it has on individuals, it becomes deducible that certain patterns of stress, anxiety, physical health problems and even critical health problems can arise (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). PSC theory also focuses on the organisational policies, procedures and practices that relate to the protection of employees' psychological health and safety, stemming largely from management practices.

According to Beale and Hoel (2011:7), policy and prevention and intervention measures are of extreme importance in the working environment. Policy is necessary in order to reduce the cost associated with the negative outcomes of workplace bullying. Unfortunately, policy is not enough to combat workplace bullying. A good employer who has a solid and respectable status in terms of the community and those employees who work for him/her is able to demonstrate a commitment to tackling workplace bullying in the organisation (Richards & Daley, 2004:247). Therefore, prevention and intervention measures are important in order to ensure that the problem of workplace bullying does not lead to the resignation, illness or death of employees (Beale & Hoel, 2011:7). These measures, alongside anti-bullying policy, become a necessity in the working environment, the reason being that employees are in need of protection not just by line managers and supervisors, but also by policy that ensures that employees do not work in fear of other employees being able to bully them (Beale & Hoel, 2011:8).

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Creswell (2014:14), research methodology can be referred to as a plan of action that is used in order to determine the research design that will be followed for a research project. In terms of research methodology, it is important to remember that it is imbedded within philosophical assumptions and theory (Creswell, 2014:14). These theories underpin the ontological approach to investigation and inform chosen theoretical perspectives of reality.

The study used a pragmatic worldview. The pragmatic worldview is pluralistic and problem-centred, has a focus on the consequences of actions and is real-world-orientated (Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011:687). Within the research paradigm of pragmatism, it is important to note that the researcher seeks to understand the problem within a real-world context. Therefore, the methodology to be used to support such a paradigm is one that speaks to the pragmatic nature of real-world problems in such a manner that they are understandable and quantifiable at the same time (Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011:687). Therefore, a mixed research design was used, employing quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and deductive and inductive approaches.

Deductive theory/reasoning looks at the most common relationship between social research and theory. According to Bryman (2012:24), the researcher looks at the theory that is relational to the domain within which the study is taking place, and then deduces from said theory a set of hypotheses that then becomes subject to empirical scrutiny. Deductive reasoning is used in order to test the theory that has been chosen and the implications that the data hold in light of the theory (Ormston *et al.*, 2014:10).

Inductive reasoning works in an opposite manner. Inductive reasoning works from observations/findings to generalise them in relation to theory. It is the movement from the general to the specific (Bryman, 2012:26). Inductive and deductive reasoning should, however, not be viewed as unrelated to each other. Inductive reasoning will always hold a level of deduction, and so deductive theory will always hold a level of induction (Bilton *et al.*, 2002:487).

Deductive reasoning took place by means of a literature study that, firstly, explored the meta-theoretical 'anchors' of the study, namely specific theoretical foundations of workplace bullying, and secondly, scrutinised the relevant legislative responses and prevention and intervention strategies that can be used to combat workplace bullying. The researcher aimed at discovering certain patterns and attitudes regarding bullying behaviour at work as well as applicable responses and strategies to combat these behaviours. Inductive reasoning took place by engaging in specific empirical research to get a thorough understanding of the nature and extent of bullying at a specific higher education institution. The empirical data were recontextualised against the relevant theories and other applicable literature, as indicated above.

The researcher made use of exploratory and descriptive research. Exploratory research is defined as research that is conducted for a problem that has not yet been studied in immense detail. The

intent of exploratory research is to establish priorities, improve the final research design and develop operational definitions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017:2). Therefore, the reason for using exploratory research was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation and to determine the relevant research design, selection method of subjects and methods of data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017:2). Descriptive research can be defined as the method by which the researcher seeks to find an accurate portrayal of the characteristics of the particular situation that is being studied (Bryman, 2012:23). The researcher observed and accurately described the nature and extent of bullying behaviour in the higher education institution under investigation in the study.

### **1.6.1 Literature review**

The idea behind a literature review is to provide insight into underlying assumptions that make up the research questions and objectives. The literature review section should cover the focus area of the research topic, intellectual traditions and related topics (Becker *et al.*, 2012:20). The literature review acts as a benchmark in order to provide a focus to the research. If the literature review is done in a sufficient manner, the study will reveal what is already known about the topic or phenomenon under investigation (Fox, 2007:5). The literature that was studied for the review focused on the following:

- Workplace bullying
- Theoretical approaches to workplace bullying
- Legislative responses to workplace bullying
- Prevention and intervention measures.

The above-mentioned resources were gathered and accessed through the internet (Google Scholar), e-publications, scientific journals and EBSCOhost. In addition, books, theses and dissertations in the field and conference proceedings were explored. Most of the databases that were used were accessed through the Ferdinand Postma Library database of North-West University (NWU).

### **1.6.2 Empirical investigation**

The study focused on a problem that required a mixed-method approach. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques to collect and analyse data.

#### 1.6.2.1 Research design

A research design is a strategy of inquiry that is followed in a study (Creswell, 2014:14). This study utilised a mixed-method sequential explanatory research design. The mixed-method approach seeks to understand the phenomenon through a collection of data that are both specific and generalisable at the same time (Creswell, 2014:215). A mixed-method sequential explanatory research design includes a distinct quantitative approach followed by a qualitative approach (Creswell *et al.*, 2003:178); the qualitative phase builds on the quantitative approach (Ivankova *et al.*, 2006:5). This is useful in interpreting, exploring and explaining the findings of research with the primary focus on the quantitative approach (Creswell *et al.*, 2003:178). Using a mixed-method sequential explanatory design allows a straightforward approach offering an opportunity to explore complex and unexpected quantitative results (Creswell *et al.*, 2003:178; Ivankova *et al.*, 2006:5). Subedi (2016:572) argues that such an approach allows a general narrative of the research problem to emerge from the quantitative data, where the qualitative data explores, extends, refines and explains this general narrative.

Therefore, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to gather and analyse data. The quantitative approach seeks to quantify data in order to determine underlining patterns of human behaviour (Becker *et al.*, 2012:20). The quantitative research method is aimed at creating an understanding of the actions and behaviours of certain groups of people in relation to the phenomenon that is being studied (Becker *et al.*, 2012:20). Qualitative research is defined as a method that seeks to collect and interpret data that can describe daily routines and problems experienced by individuals (Creswell, 2014:17; Fox, 2007:5). When using the qualitative method, it becomes possible for the researcher to gain in-depth insight into opinions, viewpoints and actions of different stakeholders and role players who play an important role in the investigation of the phenomenon that is being researched (Creswell, 2014:17).

#### 1.6.2.2 Research setting

The research setting was limited to one higher education institution; a case study was conducted. The case study method entails the intensive and detailed layout of one particular case. A case study is associated with a location; therefore, the focus is on an in-depth and intensive examination of the setting (Bryman, 2012:67).

### 1.6.2.3 Sampling

For the quantitative phase of the study, the target population comprised all academic and support staff of the higher education institution under investigation. Therefore, employees with full-time, fixed-term and temporary employment contracts were targeted as well as those with a post-doctoral fellowship. No one was excluded based on age, gender or ethnicity. A complete survey of the target population was undertaken, but as not all employees participated in the research, it resulted in a non-probability sample. Convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was used to select the respondents. Convenience sampling refers to a type of nonprobability sampling whereby the respondents selected are sampled because they are considered convenient sources of data for researchers (Lavrakas, 2008:149).

For the qualitative phase of the study, the target population included the deans and deputy deans of faculties, school directors, People and Culture representatives, and campus health and wellness representatives. Judgemental or purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the study. Purposive/Judgemental sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which the researcher uses his/her own judgement in order to identify the participants who will be taking part in the research study (Babbie, 2013:68; Bryman, 2012:202). Therefore, the participants were selected based on the judgement of who were the most suitable participants to provide the required information. An invitation email (see Annexure D) was sent to 150 prospective participants to participate in the research. Of these 150 prospective participants, only 10 participants were available to be interviewed. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanied challenges, these interviews took place via the Zoom platform and were recorded by the researcher for later investigation.

### 1.6.2.4 Data collection

In the quantitative phase of data collection, the study used structured questionnaires to reach as many academics and support staff as possible and to ensure a wide range of responses, as recommended by Creswell (2014:155). A web-based survey was created using Google Forms. Google Forms is a tool created by Google and forms part of the Google Docs collection. Google Forms is a very useful tool, as it can help plan events, send surveys, etc.

Using online questionnaires have several advantages, but also disadvantages. Wright (2005) argues that online questionnaires offers the possibility of collecting data even if the researcher is

not in the same geographical location. Using online questionnaires in order to collect data allows the use of dichotomous and multiple choice questions, as well as Likert-type and semantic differential scales, allowing the researcher to cover a diverse set of themes without much technical expertise (Regmi *et al.*, 2016:641; Wright, 2005). Online questionnaires can be constructed to increase the response rate of participants through requiring an answer from participants before they could move on to the next question (Regmi *et al.*, 2016:641). However, requiring participants to answer a question before they may proceed might result in discomfort if the question centres on sensitive topics such as, but not limited to, drug use and sexual behaviours (Regmi *et al.*, 2016:641). Furthermore, diverse and lengthy online questionnaires might not take into consideration the time constraints that participant's experience (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006: 441).

The questionnaire (see Annexure C) included three sections. Section A contained biographical questions such as gender, location of campus, age, marital status and highest qualification, length of employment at the university, nature of employment at the university and employment contract at the university. Section B measured perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work; the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) developed by Einarsen *et al.* (2009:24) and Notelaers *et al.* (2018:58) for measuring perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work was used. Section C made use of a self-constructed coded questionnaire and measured perceptions of policies and practices on inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution (university) under investigation. The Statistical Consultation Services at NWU assisted the researcher in creating the online survey. The survey was distributed among all academic and support staff at the institution under investigation; in total, 281 responses were received.

The qualitative phase of data collection focused on gaining insight into the phenomenon, alongside an understanding of the field in which it is taking place (see Bryman, 2012:67; Creswell, 2014:183). Qualitative data were collected by means of individual semi-structured interviews with keystone individuals. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with deans, deputy deans, school directors, People and Culture representatives, and campus health and wellness representatives and focused on obtaining their perspectives on workplace bullying from an organisational, departmental and institutional point of view. To effectively navigate this process of data collection, the researcher used an interview guide. According to Bryman (2012:246), an interview guide is used to establish a list of topics and themes that are being focused on in relation to the topic under investigation. One of the advantages of using an interview guide is that the

questions do not have to be asked in any particular order. Therefore, the questions that seem more important will be asked in relation to the moment and not necessarily where they appear in the interview guide. The researcher is also given leeway in terms of how the questions are asked. This means that the researcher may change the formulation and/or terminology to best suit the individual who is being interviewed and make him/her more comfortable when replying to certain questions (Bryman, 2012:247). The semi-structured interviews were used to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of bullying behaviour at the university as well as how policies and strategies were implemented at the university.

All interviews (qualitative data) and survey data (quantitative data) were conducted after informed consent was given by participants and respondents before participating in the research. Informed consent was also obtained to record the interviews.

#### 1.6.2.5 Data analysis

The data that were gathered in the quantitative phase of the research endeavour were analysed with the assistance of the Statistical Consultation Services of NWU. The primary software that was used to process the data was SPSS 27.0. By interpreting the data with the SPSS software, it becomes possible for the researcher to draw certain assumptions based on statistical testing and to capture the outcome of delineations between the quantitative data (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:2). Once the data had been collected and converted into an SPSS file, the data were coded. The coding of the data places the variables within four coding categories: nominal, ordinal, ratio and interval (Fox, 2007:24). Once in each of these categories, the data were analysed in accordance with statistical tests, as recommended by Eiselen and Uys (2016:74). A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to validate the factor structure of the workplace bullying construct and the reliability of the Cronbach's alphas (Section B of the questionnaire; see Annexure C). Three goodness-of-model-fit indices, namely chi-square statistic divided by degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), were used to determine how well the measurement model fit the data of the sample (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1 for a detailed discussion of the indices and how they were interpreted). Furthermore, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to explore the underlying structure of policies and practices (Section C of the questionnaire). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha can theoretically take on values between 0 and 1. The closer the value is to 1, the better the

internal consistency or reliability of the factor (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:118). Furthermore, descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank-order correlations, independent sample t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to analyse the data. For this phase, the assistance of the Statistical Consultation Services of the higher education institution under investigation was employed in order to ensure proficiency and professional guidance and input.

Descriptive statistics were used to provide the basic features of the data collected in the study. The goal of using descriptive statistics lies in its ability to give summarised identities to the sample as well as the measures that will be used. Descriptive statistics is the foundation for all data within the quantitative phase and is a form of data representation that is much more manageable than others (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:2). Descriptive statistics were presented in the form of means and standard deviations.

Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to determine the relative strength and the direction of association between two ranked variables (see Laerd Statistics, 2021). Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1, and is interpreted as the closer the coefficient is to zero (0), the weaker the association between the variables (Laerd Statistics, 2021). Furthermore, positive values indicate that higher values of one variable can be associated with higher values of the other variable (Puth *et al.*, 2015:4). (See Chapter 4, section 4.2.1 for a discussion of how the Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was interpreted.)

An independent sample t-test is suitable for interval or ratio variables (Sarantakos, 2013:16). An independent sample t-test is used to assess whether the means of two groups (e.g. male and female) are significantly different from each other (Trochim, 2006). Therefore, an independent sample t-test is done to determine whether or not there is statistical evidence to support the assumption that the associated population means are significantly different (Sarantakos, 2013:431; Urdan, 2016:5). (See Chapter 4, section 4.2.1 for a discussion of how the independent sample t-tests were interpreted.)

An ANOVA test is suitable for interval or ratio-level distributions (Sarantakos, 2013:434). An ANOVA test of significance is appropriate for comparing two or more samples (González-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2012:943; Sarantakos, 2013:434). The ANOVA test is very similar to a t-test; however, an ANOVA test is considered to be more powerful than a t-test (Sarantakos, 2013:434). The ANOVA test was used in this study to test whether there was a statistically significant

difference between the means of more than two groups and whether the statistical significance held any meaning for the study itself. (See Chapter 4, section 4.2.1 for a discussion of how the ANOVA tests were interpreted.)

Effect sizes were also used to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables and explain how meaningful the relationship between the two variables was (see Mvorganizing, 2021). The researcher used Cohen d-values as effect sizes to determine whether differences in means are important in practice. (See Chapter 4, section 4.2.1 for a discussion of how Cohen's d-values were interpreted.)

Qualitative data seek an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Qualitative data analysis includes data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Babbie, 2013:68). Data reduction is the process of focusing, selecting, abstracting, simplifying and transforming data that have been collected and gained from transcriptions and field notes. It is a process by which the data are structured in such a way that they are easily understandable and more condensed than the raw data collected. The process seeks to interpret the data in such a manner that they can create significance and meaning. Data display is simply the categorisation and organisation of the data that have been collected throughout the qualitative phase. The process of data display also includes the drawing of conclusions based on the interpretation of data already collected. The act of drawing a conclusion can only occur when the researcher understands the phenomenon that is taking place and as a result can give valid explanations for the reasons behind the occurrence of the phenomenon (Bryman, 2012:246).

The data that were collected through semi-structured interviews were analysed through the process of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used to analyse data by focusing on themes which are identified by means of coding (Sarantakos, 2013:370). According to Attride-Stirling (2001:385), thematic analysis includes the following six steps and sub-steps:

- Code material.
  - Create a coding framework.
  - Divide the text into specific text segments through the use of the coding framework.
- Identify themes.
  - Abstract themes from the coded text segments.

- Refine existing themes.
- Construct thematic networks.
  - Arrange the themes in a specific order.
  - Select the basic themes that will be used.
  - Rearrange the basic themes into organising themes.
  - Deduce the global themes.
  - Illustrate the thematic networks.
  - Verify the networks and then refine the networks that have been chosen.
- Describe and explore thematic networks.
  - Describe the particular networks.
  - Explore the particular networks.
- Summarise the thematic networks.
- Interpret patterns.

The qualitative phase acted in close relation to the quantitative phase. The results of the qualitative and quantitative phases were linked through the data that were gathered within each phase. In the quantitative phase, perceptions of employees about bullying in the workplace were collected. In the qualitative phase, the perceptions of deans and deputy deans of faculties, school directors, People and Culture representatives, and campus health and wellness representatives on campus were gathered. During this phase of data analysis, the participants were assigned numerical values to their identities (e.g. Participant 1 is referred to as P1) to protect employees and to keep their anonymity intact, and pseudonyms were assigned to the different sites of delivery (Campus A, B or C) to further protect the identities of the participants. Furthermore, the qualitative phase identified which human resource policies, strategies and anti-bullying mandates were in place to protect employees. The qualitative analysis process is further elaborated on in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.

The final phase of the data analysis was the writing up of the findings. This entails seeking out the relation between literature and the findings that have come to light through the empirical investigation of the phenomenon. The aim was to establish whether the results and findings of

the empirical study disputed or confirmed the central theoretical statements and the argumentation in the literature review, as stated by Bryman (2012:182).

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Researchers should always be conscious and alert about what is considered ethical in the setting in which they find themselves. According to NWU, there are certain ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when conducting social research in which most, if not all, participants are human. According to NWU (2016:3), the research that is done should always be beneficial to the participants and never put them in any way of harm or danger. The main goal of the researcher is to find a solution to the problem that has been identified (by the researcher) within a specific community or society. The researcher should also seek to work in tandem with the participants by providing constant feedback on the research that has already been conducted. There should also be a clear understanding of the risk that will be taken by the participants in terms of the study. Furthermore, the benefit that will be drawn from being able to collect real-time data will help the researcher in identifying the social problem, but will also make the participants feel that they are a part of something bigger. This, however, should not be in constant flux, as the participants should be able to observe an equal distribution of risk and benefit between themselves and the researcher (Babbie, 2013:25; Bryman, 2012:246; Creswell, 2014:71). Furthermore, according to Babbie (2013:25), the researcher has the obligation to keep the participants informed at all times (even beforehand) about what the research will entail and the goals that are being sought by the researcher.

Approval to conduct the research was granted by the Arts Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities of the university under investigation (NWU-00900-19-A7). The researcher of the study conducted the research within the carefully thought-out and laid-out principles that have been provided by NWU's Research Ethics Regulatory Committee, as outlined in the Policy and Rules for Research Ethics at NWU (NWU, 2016:3). It was important that participation in the research was voluntary. Informed consent forms and permission from the participants taking part in the research were required and obtained in writing by the researcher. Furthermore, confidentiality was discussed with each participant and was also granted to each participant to keep the information that had been given confidentially. This means that the information given by the participants was known to the researcher, the supervisor and other parties involved in the research itself, but this information was not made public. The researcher strived to uphold the

autonomy of the participants of the study. It was communicated to the participants that not only could they withdraw from the study whenever they wanted, but they also had the right to confidentiality and the right to be kept anonymous, as suggested by Babbie (2013:25), Babbie and Mouton (2004:71), Bryman (2012:182) and Creswell (2014:17).

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Workplace bullying is difficult to research at best; researching it within a higher education institution brought with it a set of its own challenges. In terms of the all-inclusive survey study that was done, there was the possibility that it might not be all-inclusive due to not all staff being reached or some not being willing to participate. The assistance of the Statistical Consultation Services of NWU was sought to provide guidance in this regard.

The participants who took part in the qualitative phase of this study were all high-ranking members in their respective departments. Therefore, effort was made to interview these individuals; the interviewing of these individuals was made possible through proper preparation and insurmountable effort. These high-ranking officials were contacted in order to set up meeting dates that best suited their busy schedules. The timing of the research was also considered. The selected participants were respected in terms of their schedules and working hours. However, it happened that some interviews had to be cut short, and in some instances were cancelled. Furthermore, the researcher had to schedule and reschedule on many occasions to accommodate the busy schedules of all the high-ranking members in their respective departments. Few of the individuals who were contacted replied to the initial invitation to take part in this study; as a result, fewer participants took part in the qualitative phase than was expected.

## **1.9 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study adds to the available literature on workplace bullying, globally and nationally. The study paid special attention to the way in which bullying was understood within the context of the workplace. Furthermore, it gave focus to workplace bullying as a problem that has immense consequences for workforces, in general, and for higher education institutions, specifically (Donegan, 2012:33). According to Jacobs and Teise (2019:1), tertiary educators across South Africa are no different and experience bullying in the working environment. Furthermore, Ngwane (2018:163) also confirms that workplace bullying exists in South African universities, among staff members and also those who are in supervising and managerial roles. However, in South Africa,

workplace bullying in tertiary educational institutions is grossly underresearched. There is a lack of studies focusing on workplace bullying in the tertiary education sector in national contexts (Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013:89). Therefore, due to studies underreporting the prevalence of workplace bullying among employees at higher education institutions, this study aimed at adding to the literature on bullying in South African higher education institutions.

## **1.10 CHAPTER LAYOUT**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction, orientation, problem statement and research methodology**

This chapter provided the introduction, background and orientation to the study. It also outlined the problem statement of the study and stated the research questions and objectives of the study. The research methodology that was followed was also outlined.

### **Chapter 2: Workplace bullying: a theoretical overview**

This chapter provides the theoretical approaches and perspectives on workplace bullying. Furthermore, bullying behaviour in higher education institutions are discussed.

### **Chapter 3: Combatting workplace bullying: legislative response and intervention measures**

This chapter explores the statutory and legal perspectives on workplace bullying in South Africa, and the intervention measures that could possibly be used in relation to the phenomenon.

### **Chapter 4: Empirical results, findings and analyses**

This chapter discusses the empirical results, findings and analyses of the study and includes an integration with the theoretical chapters.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations**

This chapter provides the conclusions of the research and makes recommendations for future research in this field.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 1 gave an introductory overview of the study. It provided the problem statement and stated the research questions and objectives of the study. Furthermore, the researcher outlined the research methodology and discussed the research design, ethical considerations, limitations and significance of the research. In Chapter 2, the researcher explores the theoretical approaches and perspectives on workplace bullying with specific reference to bullying behaviour in higher education institutions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **WORKPLACE BULLYING: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 provided an introductory overview of the study. The chapter set out the problem of the study, formulated the research questions and objectives and outlined the methodology that was followed in the study. This chapter presents the concepts and theoretical underpinnings inherent to workplace bullying to obtain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. First, the term 'workplace bullying' is defined and conceptualised. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the theoretical approaches to workplace bullying. The following theoretical approaches are dealt with, as they gave a comprehensive understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon from a theoretical viewpoint: the Leymann model, Tajfel's social identity theory, the conflict escalation model of Glasl and PSC theory. This section is followed by a brief discussion of the different forms of workplace bullying. Next, a discussion of the characteristics of the perpetrator and target is provided, followed by a discussion of the antecedents and effects of workplace bullying. Consequently, a global and national perspective on the prevalence of workplace bullying is given, followed by a discussion of the nature and extent of workplace bullying in higher education institutions. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the association between selected socio-demographic variables and workplace bullying.

#### **2.2 DEFINING AND CONCEPTUALISING WORKPLACE BULLYING AND RELATED KEY CONCEPTS**

Bullying has existed for a long time and still does within the modern-day workplace. There **is** a multitude of concepts that need to be defined in order to describe the bullying act or behaviour. Therefore, this section defines and conceptualises the key concepts related to workplace bullying.

The workplace bully is referred to as the instigator, while the person who is being bullied by the instigator is referred to as the target (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:70). The term 'workplace bullying' is often used interchangeably with 'harassment' and 'mobbing' (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:70; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:5; Keashly & Neuman, 2010:49–50). The reason why there **is** more than one conceptual term to describe workplace bullying is due to different countries having different

perceptions of what is regarded as bullying behaviours and acts (Branch *et al.*, 2013:280; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:5; Keashly & Neuman, 2010:49–50). Workplace bullying is considered as a type of workplace harassment and has certain commonalities with workplace harassment (Wärnich *et al.*, 2018:499). Harassment in the workplace can be described as a form of employment conflict, and it can occur in any kind of organisation (Fornés *et al.*, 2011:185). According to Crawshaw (2009:265), harassment in the workplace involves one or more perpetrators and occurs at various degrees of frequency and severity. These perpetrators target various individuals, intentionally and/or unintentionally, at various levels of the organisation (Crawshaw, 2009:265).

In German-speaking countries, the term ‘mobbing’ is preferred, whereas in English-speaking countries, the term ‘bullying’ is preferred, in order to describe the same phenomenon (Chirilă & Constantin, 2013:1178–1179). Workplace mobbing is defined as negative or offensive behaviour that is repeated over time and that is aimed at one individual or a group of individuals in attempts to undermine or humiliate the individual or group of individuals (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:49–50).

Similarly, workplace bullying is referred to as an act of intentional aggressive behaviour or aggressive acts carried out by an individual or group against another individual or group that cannot defend or protect themselves against the negative act being enacted upon them (Whitney & Smith, 1993:4). Therefore, the workplace bully who has any source of power targets victims who have trouble or difficulty protecting themselves from the attacks of the workplace bully (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:70). The negative actions aim at causing distress, fear or severe harm to the targeted individual (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:70). Workplace bullying is closely linked to the conception of time or a timeframe. According to Einarsen *et al.* (2011:6), workplace bullying is an act that takes place over time that is repeated at least once a week, for a period of no less than six months. Therefore, workplace bullying can be seen as the systematic abuse of power by a group or by an individual over a certain period (Langos, 2012:285; Madan, 2014:1742). If an individual is being made fun of in an environment in which the culture supports such action, and the action itself only takes place once and never again, it can be considered as playful banter (Langos, 2012:285; Madan, 2014:1742).

Furthermore, workplace bullying can be categorised into two subgroups, namely direct and indirect workplace bullying. Direct workplace bullying is when there is direct contact between the target and the victim, such as verbal threats or physical abuse (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:74).

Indirect workplace bullying is indirect actions by the bully intended on affecting the desired target, such as an embarrassing photo on a boardroom wall or the spreading of a rumour about the intended target (Arseneault *et al.*, 2010:718).

For this study, the researcher used the term 'workplace bullying' to describe the negative actions and behaviours by an individual or group against another individual or group in the working environment for a period of six months or longer. Furthermore, the term 'workplace bullying' is used to shed light on specific actions in the workplace that constitute workplace bullying, and not just actions viewed as harassment or discrimination.

## **2.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO WORKPLACE BULLYING**

In order to investigate workplace bullying as a phenomenon that exists in a higher education institution of South Africa, a theoretical framework and point of departure were needed. Therefore, the following four theoretical approaches were explored: the Leymann model, Tajfel's social identity theory, the conflict escalation model of Glasl and PSC theory.

### **2.3.1 *The Leymann model***

The Leymann model was created by Heinz Leymann in the late 1980s and early 1990s to understand the role that mobbing plays in the working environment (Leymann, 1996). Leymann (1996:168) uses the term 'mobbing' in order to encompass all actions that are related to forms of bullying and/or harassment in the working environment. Mobbing is defined by Leymann (1996:168) as a social interaction that takes place between two individuals or groups of individuals, where one individual is attacked by another individual or group of individuals over a period. The act of mobbing places the person who is being harassed (the victim), under immense pressure, making him/her feel helpless and extremely uncomfortable with the situation in which he/she finds him-/herself (Leymann, 1996:168). Therefore, the act of mobbing in the working environment takes place in such a manner that the relationship between those who are bullied and those who enact the bullying warrants further investigation (Leymann, 1996:168).

In large companies, management aims to design tasks as simple as possible (Constantinescu, 2014:499). In general, these tasks have been automatised to such a degree that fewer qualified employees are needed to complete said tasks. Mobbing may then appear as a result of inactivity, lack of activity or boredom (Constantinescu, 2014:499). What this means is that the perpetrator

(bully) basically chooses his/her target (victim) and enacts workplace mobbing upon him/her simply to pass the time. Improper task management can be a trigger of workplace mobbing, because work situations inevitably create conflict among employees (Constantinescu, 2014:499). The Leymann model argues strongly against individual factors as antecedents of bullying (Leymann, 1990:119–120; 1996:165). According to Leymann, individual factors that relate to the personality of victims are not necessarily the determining factors of why people get bullied (Leymann, 1990:119–120; 1996:165). The Leymann model suggests that organisational factors, such as leadership behaviour, work design, the victims' socially exposed position and department morale, are determining factors of workplace bullying (Einarsen *et al.*, 2004:16; Leymann, 1990:119–120; 1996:165). These factors are discussed below.

*Leadership behaviour.* The manner in which leadership is implemented in the working environment has an effect on how the act of mobbing influences the victim thereof (Leymann, 1996:170–171). Leadership in the working environment can have an influence on how employees perceive their actions and the actions of others in the workplace (Hoel *et al.*, 2010:454). A lack of leadership or the specific leadership style practised may lead to employees being ostracised and excluded (Ciby & Raya, 2014:75). Leadership and leadership styles can lead to victims feeling that management provides no opportunities for communication and as a result silences the victims of workplace mobbing (Leymann, 1996:170–171). Another possible outcome of poor leadership in the working environment leading to mobbing is verbal threats and verbal rejection from those expected to lead their employees (Leymann, 1996:170–171). Poor leadership can lead to uncoordinated workplace teams and employees, as well as a distrust among colleagues and management (Ciby & Raya, 2014:75; Leymann, 1996:170–171; Skogstad *et al.*, 2011:478). Furthermore, poor leadership styles can lead to unnecessary workplace stress and a decrease in work performance and workplace productivity (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74–77; Skogstad *et al.*, 2011:478).

*Work design.* Work design can be used by others (management and staff) in the organisation as a weapon to target specific employees or groups of employees (Leymann, 1996:170–171). Work design can lead to employees being given work tasks that do not fall within their job descriptions or responsibilities; they can be given work that is far below their occupational level or that is meaningless to their jobs or the organisation as a whole (Leymann, 1996:170–171). Furthermore, employees can be given unrealistic workloads and may therefore become overworked (Ciby & Raya, 2014:73). Employees may become too strained to be able to do their work, and in extreme

cases, to come to work at all (Baillien *et al.*, 2011:193–194). In working environments where bullies exist, employees report elevated levels of role conflict, and as a result both victims and bystanders of bullying can suffer from an ill-conditioned working environment and design (Einarsen, 2000:10). It should also be noted that in a situation where people are forced to work together and are highly interdependent, the possibility for a conflict situation to develop becomes a definitive reality (Einarsen, 2000:10).

*The victims' socially exposed position.* Expectations regarding roles and incompatible demands, responsibility and tasks may create frustration and stress within a work group, especially when viewed in relation to rights, obligations, positions and privileges (Einarsen, 1999:22). In turn, such a situation may then be viewed as a precursor to conflict, a creator of poor interworker relationships and the inevitable need for a suitable scapegoat (Einarsen, 1999:22). These influences can be as far reaching as victims struggling to maintain their personal reputations and social contracts with their fellow employees (Leymann, 1996:170–171). Victims of workplace mobbing often go through physical and psychological torment, their work capacity becomes diminished and there is a drastic decrease in self-esteem (Constantinescu, 2014:500). Their socio-emotional balance becomes altered (depression, panic attacks, phobias, anxiety), alongside their physiological balance (gastrointestinal disorders, dizziness, sleep disorders, headaches), as well as their behavioural stability (passivity, change in eating behaviours, self-harm and hetero-aggressive outbursts) (Constantinescu, 2014:500). Constantinescu (2014:500) discusses the existential crisis with which victims of mobbing have to deal, for example when a victim loses his/her job, it might directly and indirectly threaten his/her identity and sense of self-worth. Ultimately, Constantinescu (2014:500) comes to the conclusion that mobbing is inefficient for any organisation. Furthermore, workplace mobbing can affect the professional performance of the victim, it may have an effect on work relationships, it may lead to improper communication among colleagues and management and it may lead to a severe decrease in the productivity of the victim and bystanders, all of which lead to the culminating loss of efficacy for the organisation (Constantinescu, 2014:500).

*Department morale.* The effects of mobbing are indeed real and worrisome. It is a form of psychological abuse in the working environment that can be carried out by colleagues or supervisors through repeated aggressive acts (Constantinescu, 2014:497). Mobbing in the workplace may lead to low department morale (Constantinescu, 2014:499). According to Leymann (1996:170), the effects that mobbing has on the individual and department morale can

be categorised. Effects on the victims' possibility to communicate adequately are among the first mentioned by Leymann. This effect on the ability to communicate within the organisation and sub-departments is characterised by management not giving victims/employees any possibility to communicate, alongside abusive and negative verbal communication between management and employees (Leymann, 1996:170). The effect on the victims' possibilities to maintain social contracts is another effect identified by Leymann (1996:170) that has an impact on department morale. According to Leymann (1996:170), this effect on the victim causes colleagues to stop talking to the person, and in more severe cases these employees are forbidden to communicate with other employees by management. The third effect identified by Leymann (1996:170) is the effect of workplace mobbing and the victims' ability to maintain their personal reputation. This effect on the employee is characterised by gossiping about the victim among employees and ridicule from employees with whom they work (Leymann, 1996:170).

Another effect that can influence the department morale of an organisation and its employees is the effect on the victims' occupational situation (Leymann, 1996:170). This effect on department morale is characterised by management giving no work tasks to the victim, or the assigning of meaningless tasks to the victim (those that fall outside the parameters of his/her job description) (Leymann, 1996:170). The final effect that is identified by Leymann (1996:170) as having an effect on department morale is the effect of workplace mobbing/bullying on the victims' physical health. This effect on employees who are victims of workplace mobbing/bullying manifests in management assigning dangerous work tasks as well as other employees who threaten victims with physical violence or physically attack them (Leymann, 1996:170). If the system in the company or organisation is not organised in a proper fashion, disputes between employees and management may lead to incidences of workplace mobbing. Due to unfortunate stigmatisation that takes place in organisations in relation to the misjudgement of the situation as being the fault of the subjected person, management has a tendency of accepting the prejudices produced by the previously mentioned organisational factors (Leymann, 1996:172). The problematic behaviour that becomes associated with departmental morale is that it later becomes a case identified by the desire to incite action in order to get rid of the victims of workplace mobbing (Leymann, 1996:172).

The Leymann model also outlines four stages of bullying that takes place over time (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). According to Leymann (1990:121–122; 1996:171–172), bullying (mobbing) can be viewed as an escalated conflict situation. The first

stage, according to Leymann, is critical incidents. It is in this stage that the triggering situation is most often a conflict (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). The source of the conflict may be unknown and the duration of this initial stage may be shorter than the others. The second stage is bullying (mobbing) and stigmatising. In this stage, bullying (mobbing) activities may involve a number of behaviours that are targeted at an individual or group on a daily basis over an extended time (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). This stage is characterised by aggressive manipulation and as a result often leads to a person being stigmatised and bullied (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). The third stage is personnel management. Once the need arises for management to step in, the conflict situation becomes an official case (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). Unfortunately, it often happens that in this stage, management misjudges the situation as being the fault of the victim, thereby accepting the negative preconceived notions that have been projected by the bully's negative view of the victim (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). This most often results in a serious violation of rights and ultimately leads to the victim becoming marked and further stigmatised. Furthermore, colleagues and management have the tendency of creating explanations based on personal characteristics rather than organisational and environmental factors (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). The expulsion of the victim from the organisation is the final stage. The victim may develop serious illnesses and may seek medical or psychological help (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172). There is the possibility of medical professionals not believing the victim and as a result misdiagnosing the victim. The most common misdiagnosis is that of paranoia, character disturbance and manic depression (Botha, 2019:6–7; Leymann, 1990:121–122; 1996:171–172).

According to Zapf and Gross (2001:502), one of the strongest critiques that can be levelled against the Leymann model of workplace mobbing is that of specificity. Due to the nature of the model, it specifically focuses on organisational factors as antecedents to workplace mobbing; however, Zapf and Gross (2001:502) state that by doing so, the model excludes important variables that need to be considered when discussing workplace mobbing. The model presented by Leymann fails to speak to and focus on stress management strategies as well as conflict management, hence the Glasl's conflict escalation model is considered (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502), and is also elaborated on in 2.3.3. Next, Tajfel's social identity theory is discussed.

### **2.3.2      *Tajfel's social identity theory***

Social identity theory was created by Henri Tajfel and Jhon Turner in the 1970s to understand the inbuilt tendencies of people to categorise themselves into one or more socially identifiable groups (Tajfel, 2010:2). Social identity is something that is ingrained in all societies, be it national or global. It is a term that is broadly used in order to understand the manner in which individuals or groups of individuals perceive themselves in the private, public and working environments (Ramsay *et al.*, 2011:799). Therefore, social identity is the identity that an individual ascribes to him- or herself and relates to the forming of individuals' concept of themselves. This self-concept is derivable from individuals' knowledge of social groups, such as understanding the ins and outs and the do's and don'ts of the particular social group to which they wish to belong (Tajfel, 2010:2).

Social identity theory is based on the realisation that all individuals in society are identified or find their identity in relation to those around them and those they come into contact with on a daily basis (Einarsen *et al.*, 2004:13). Tajfel's social identity theory is rooted in the understanding that workplace bullying, and indeed any form of bullying, be it public or private, is based on an interpersonal phenomenon that finds its basis within a dynamic interaction between two or more parties (Einarsen *et al.*, 2004:13).

The theory itself focuses on the manner in which different individuals, or groups of individuals, interact within the confines and parameters that are associated with both the social setting and a more applicable workplace setting (Tajfel, 2010:2). Social identity is formed within the parameters associated with the value and significance that an individual may, or may not, attribute to membership of a certain group (Tajfel, 2010:3). If the individual decides that the significance attributed to a certain group is of sufficient value, the individual's social identity starts taking form in relation to the group that he/she has decided to become a part of.

Once the social identity of individuals has been formed within their respective groups, a new matter arises that further shapes the identity of both the group and the individuals who form part thereof. Individual social identity leads inherently to collective group social identity. This means that individuals who make up the group are also responsible for creating the social identity of the group as a whole (Tajfel, 2010:2). However, as soon as these identities have become prevalent, the opportunity for conflict arises – in this particular case, conflict within the group itself, but also conflict that may arise with other groups (Tajfel, 2010:2). According to Galang and Jones (2016:5), people are motivated to both establish and maintain a positive social identity through the

comparison of differences and similarities with out-groups to which they do not belong. The groups to which one belongs, the groups that shape one's feelings, ideologies and norms, are known as in-groups and form a part of one's social identity (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019:4–5). The groups that stand opposite one's group, the people who form other groups or other work groups, are examples of out-groups if one does not belong to them (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019:5). It is argued that people strive for positive social identity in the same way as positive identity. It is often the case that individuals belonging to groups will look for positive identity and social identity within their own group, rather than seeking their identity in relation to out-groups (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019:6).

The social identity of the group, according to Tajfel (2010:2), finds its origin within the relationships that exist between social groups and the conflicts they may encounter with one another. Furthermore, it is centred on the role played in the conflict that is taking place by and between the individuals who make up part of these groups (Tajfel, 2010:2). Once an employee or group has manifested their social identity, the possibility of already existing groups treating them differently becomes more prevalent (Madera *et al.*, 2012:167).

According to Cunliff and Mostert (2012:2), in order to understand social identity, it is paramount to understand the social demographics (e.g. sex, ethnicity, race and age) of the individuals who take part in the act of workplace bullying. These demographic differences among employees can lead to both negative and positive outcomes in relation to the manner in which they are perceived in the working environment (Guillaume *et al.*, 2017:276). For example, in terms of gender, there can be a creation of two groups that stand opposite each other and as such find their individuality among their gender groups (Cunliff & Mostert, 2012:2–6). Furthermore, other social demographics may play a role as well, for instance the perpetrator's insecurity and low self-esteem may push the individual to act out towards other individuals, ultimately bullying them due to their own shortcomings (Indvik & Johnson, 2012:74). The target of bullying may then often be individuals who are withdrawn from social interaction and do not fit in with any particular groups (Shin, 2010:382). Therefore, such individuals are much easier to target, as they do not often have a strong social identity within the group or as an individual separate from said group.

In a study conducted by Lange *et al.* (2019:237–240), investigating the prevalence of workplace bullying and the role of the perpetrator among employees in Germany, the authors tested a multitude of socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and occupational status. The

results of the study showed that employees are often targeted due to their socio-demographic identity being targeted. Although the results of the study indicated that gender did not play a role, age and occupational status were found to be determining socio-demographic factors of the bullying taking place among employees who participated (Lange *et al.*, 2019:237). A similar study was conducted by Himmer (2016:1–2), investigating the effect of target demographics and emotional intelligence on workplace bullying in the USA. In this study, the author found that the role played by socio-demographic factors such as age, gender and occupational orientation does indeed have an influence on whether an individual is targeted by a bully (Himmer, 2016:37). For instance, if a person is younger than 25 in a group of employees who are predominantly older than 35, the chances of such an individual being bullied becomes more likely (Himmer, 2016:37; Lange *et al.*, 2019:237).

Social identity theory has been critiqued for paying too little attention to the manner in which identity is constrained and shaped by a dynamic and ever-changing social context (Campbell, 1995:150). Social identity theory does not allow for different shades of identity (Huddy, 2002:833). Social identity is critiqued in this sense for viewing identity as either social or personal, with little accommodation for the possibility of something in-between the two categories (Huddy, 2002:833). Tajfel's social identity theory is critiqued by Huddy (2002:833) on the basis that a theory that rests heavily on the power of context cannot explain why some individuals are more fully committed to the group than others. Furthermore, Huddy (2002:833) states that even though Tajfel refers to individual group members' differing levels of commitment, there is little to no evidence in the theory itself that supports this claim.

Social identity theory has been applied in a study by Galang and Jones (2016:2). A total of 65 participants completed an online questionnaire in which experiences of bullying, job satisfaction and social identity were measured (Galang & Jones, 2016:2). The analysis of the findings pointed towards the value of social identity theory in explaining the relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction, as the results indicated that social identity fully mediates the association between workplace bullying and job satisfaction (Galang & Jones, 2016:2). The value of social identity theory lies in its ability to link antecedents of workplace bullying to the social identity of the individual through both individual capacity and group capacity alike. This claim suggests that support from other employees and direct work colleagues, alongside increased self-esteem from being part of a group, may help reduce symptoms felt from work-related stress, such

as workplace bullying (Galang & Jones, 2016:5). Next, the conflict escalation model of Glasl is elaborated on.

### **2.3.3      *The conflict escalation model of Glasl***

The conflict escalation model was created in 1997 by Friedrich Glasl in order to assist with the analysis of conflict situations. The study at hand used Glasl's model to investigate conflict and levels of conflict escalation in the working environment. According to Rahim (cited by Jha & Jha, 2010:77–78), conflict in the workplace relates to disagreements, incompatibility or differences between an individual and his/her subordinates, superiors and peers. According to Keashly and Nowell (2011:339–340), there is a difference between conflict and bullying. In a conflict situation, all parties involved have an equal opportunity to defend themselves. In a workplace bullying situation, the target cannot defend him-/herself against what is happening (Keashly & Nowell, 2011:339–340).

Conflict in the workplace is in itself unavoidable, as each individual that makes up part of the whole has his/her own personality, norms and values (Einarsen *et al.*, 2002:433; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:25). Conflict occurs in the workplace when there is a relationship that includes more than one party. These parties that make up the relationship possess the ability to turn any situation between them into a situation that is inherently negative and conflict-ridden (Einarsen *et al.*, 2002:433; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:25). Conflict in the working environment is difficult to avoid, because there will always be some manner or form of its existence within the interpersonal relationships between individuals and groups of individuals (Einarsen *et al.*, 2002:433; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:25).

Conflict in the working environment needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. If not dealt with within a short amount of time, conflict may have disastrous consequences for the organisation (Einarsen *et al.*, 2002:433; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:25). There are different levels of conflict escalation that need to be dealt with in different manners. Different strategies are used for handling conflict in the working environment, such as judicial conflict solving, mediation, arbitration, good services, power intervention, process consultation, etc. (Fisher, 1972; La Tour *et al.*, 1976). However, these strategies can only work in the organisation or institution through a thorough understanding of how conflict escalates in a working environment.

According to Glasl's model (1982:119–121), the basis for conflict escalation in the workplace is rooted within the premise that both the stages of conflict (from the start and introduction of the conflict to its inevitable conclusion) and the strategies that need to be used in order to combat and eradicate conflict are grounded in the intensity of the conflict under investigation.

Glasl's model distinguishes between three phases and nine stages of conflict escalation. The three phases are as follows: Phase 1: Rationality and control; Phase 2: Severing the relationship; and Phase 3: Aggression and destruction (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:20–22). The phases and their respective stages as well as the de-escalation strategies per phase are discussed in the section below and is depicted in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1: Glasl's model of conflict escalation and conflict management practices**

Source: Zapf and Gross (2001)

**Phase 1: Rationality and control.** In Phase 1, the parties who are engaged in conflict are still invested and interested in reasonable solutions to the problems they are facing (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). During this phase, there is some degree of cooperation in order to deal mostly with impersonal issues or topics. The parties are aware of the existence of conflict; however, they try to handle such conflicts in a controlled and rational manner (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). The first phase is linked to three stages of conflict escalation. In Stage 1 there are attempts to cooperate. During this stage, there are also accompanying factors such as unforeseen slips, for example the wrong use of language to address an individual or accidentally causing the conflict by being insensitive without knowledge thereof (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). These unforeseen slips may

cause friction and tension among the parties involved (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Stage 2 focuses on polarisation and debating style. During this stage, parties are still willing to debate the issue that is causing the conflict (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Stage 3 focuses on the interaction of the two parties involved through the individuals' actions and deeds, instead of the individuals using verbal methods of solving the conflict (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). This is also the stage where the parties involved (if the conflict is not solved) start to focus on each other rather than the problem they initially tried to solve (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:20–22).

In Phase 1, the conflict de-escalation strategy to be used is moderation (stages 1–3). Moderation takes place when both parties are still willing to resolve the conflict through mediation (talking through the conflict). The conflict may be resolved through self-help, help from friends and family as well as professional moderation by a third party that is neutral and unbiased (George, 2007).

**Phase 2: Severing the relationship.** Phase 2 focuses on severing the relationship. During this phase, the origin of the conflict has more or less disappeared and the root of tension has now become the relationship between the parties. Overt hostility, lack of respect and distrust start to evolve during this phase, and as a result the parties no longer work together to solve the conflict, but rather seek to exclude each other (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:21; Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Phase 2 is linked to stages 4, 5 and 6 of conflict escalation. Stage 4, concern for reputation and coalition, focuses on the person who is identified as the problem and the attention of parties involved is focused on saving face and keeping their reputation intact (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:21). Stage 5, the loss of face (reputation and morals), indicates the evolution of lack of trust, disrespect and overt hostility (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:21). Stage 6, dominance of strategies of threat, is reached once there is openly hostile and aggressive behaviour among the parties involved.

In Phase 2, the conflict de-escalation strategies to be used are process company (stages 3–5), socio-therapeutic process company (stages 4–6) and professional mediation (stages 5–7). Process company (support) is the strategy where help is sought through professional process support from within the company for which the employees work. This entails seeking professional guidance from an internal third party (such as Human Resources) to solve the conflict (Von, 2019). Socio-therapeutic process company is sought from an external company and is focused on seeking help through external socio-therapeutic process support. Socio-therapeutic process company is the process by which the goal is the transformation of behaviour, strategies and

means that are used by those involved in the conflict (Graf *et al.*, 2010:67). Mediation is the process by which the conflict is resolved by a professional mediator that acts as an objective third party decision-maker. Mediation uses the intent to resolve conflict where a third party (neutral mediation) is brought in to resolve the disputants' conflict through guidance and professional assistance (George, 2007).

**Phase 3: Aggression and destruction.** The final phase focuses on aggression and destruction. During the third phase, confrontations become seemingly more destructive than in the first two phases (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Due to the lack of willingness from either party to resolve the conflict, the 'other party' is seen as having no human dignity, and as a result, any possibility of positive outcome is blocked. The escalation has reached such a detrimental level that the parties involved are willing to risk everything, even their existence, in order to hurt or destroy the other (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). However, Glasl argues that this phase would rarely be reached in an organisation (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). This phase relates to stages 7, 8 and 9 of conflict escalation. Stage 7 includes the systematic destructive campaigns against the sanction potential of the other party. This means that there are destructive campaigns in the company that can lead to the potential sanctioning of strategies against the threat (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Stage 8 focuses on attacks against the power nerves of the enemy. During this stage, there are no longer any limits on what the parties are willing to risk in order to win (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:20). Stage 9 is the total destruction and possible suicide of the victims of the initial conflict. During this stage, the final stage, both parties are willing to risk their own welfare and existence in order to win, no matter what (Keashly & Nowell, 2002:20).

In Phase 3, the conflict de-escalation strategies to be used are arbitration award (stages 6–8) and power intervention (stages 7–9) (Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Arbitration award is used as a strategy when the conflict is resolved through voluntary or mandatory participation in arbitrary awards. Arbitrary rewards are characteristically an award of damages against a party and there is a range of remedies that can form part of the award (Mistelis & Baltag, 2008: 320). These rewards may include the following: payment of a sum of money, ordering of a party to do or refrain from doing something (such as bullying), ordering specific performances of contract, etc. (Mistelis & Baltag, 2008: 320). The power intervention strategy takes effect when all other strategies have failed and de-escalating the conflict through power intervention from seniors is necessary. This is the last stage and is employed only if all else fails. In this particular stage, the conflict is dealt with in a top-down manner in which those who have more power (senior managers, directors, etc.) resolve

the conflict through the use of mechanisms available to them (Glasl, 1982:119; Keashly & Nowell, 2002:222; Zapf & Gross, 2001:502). Examples may include the contract that has been signed or the enforcing of a company mandate with full effect from upper management (Glasl, 1982:119; Keashly & Nowell, 2002:222; Zapf & Gross, 2001:502).

Therefore, in terms of the conflict escalation model, the intensity of the conflict that is taking place dictates the strategies that will be used in order to resolve the conflict in the working environment. Zapf and Thierau (2013:46) state that the conflict escalation model of Glasl plays an important role in the management of workplace bullying. The model suggests that the management of conflict depends on the level to which the conflict has been escalated (Zapf & Thierau, 2013:46). According to Jordan (2000:1), Glasl's conflict escalation model is a very useful and accurate tool for the conflict facilitator. Furthermore, it is regarded as a valuable tool to sensitise people and employees to the mechanisms of conflict escalation (Jordan, 2000:1). Greater awareness is spread in regard to the steps that should be avoided if the goal is to prevent the conflict from escalating out of control (Jordan, 2000:1). Finally, in terms of academic relevance, the model provides a theory of conflict escalation that emphasises the situational pressures enacted upon people involved in conflict (Jordan, 2000:1).

The conflict escalation model that is presented by Glasl (1982:120–121) is used to better understand the diversity and multitude of factors that may or may not play a role when investigating conflict in the working environment. The model can be used to identify conflict, the intensity of conflict, the manner in which it escalates and the strategies that can be used in order to combat and eradicate conflict in the organisation or institution under investigation. The model was used to understand the different phases and stages of conflict. Furthermore, it shed light on the process that could be followed to address workplace bullying.

#### **2.3.4      *Psychosocial safety climate theory***

PSC theory was created by a group of researchers in the 1990s (Dollard & Karasek, 2010:208). 'Psychosocial safety climate' refers to a climate for psychological health and safety (Bradley *et al.*, 2012:156). Furthermore, PSC refers to a shared perception of organisational practices, policies and perceptions for the protection of employees' and workers' psychological health and safety (Law *et al.*, 2011:1782).

PSC theory has developed tremendously over time and provides a multilevel explanation of the causes of work stress (Zadow *et al.*, 2019:31). PSC theory added to individual explanations of occupational stress such as job demands and effort-reward imbalance (Zadow *et al.*, 2019:31). PSC theory also extends the Job Demands–Resources framework and proposes that organisational-level PSC determines work conditions and, as a result, work engagement and psychological health problems (Law *et al.*, 2011:1782). Furthermore, it should be noted that PSC theory was the first theory developed to offer a multilevel explanation of work stress, providing academics with a theoretical model by which to measure, monitor, evaluate and benchmark causes of work-related stress (on an individual and team level) within a single conceptual framework (Zadow *et al.*, 2019:31).

According to scholars such as Ciby and Raya (2014:72), the effects of workplace bullying on employees is detrimental to both the employees who fall victim to such negative behaviours and the organisation. PSC theory is centred on the manner in which employees perceive their safety, physically and psychologically, in the working environment (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). Furthermore, PSC theory allows for the investigation of organisational policies, practices and procedures that relate to the protection of employees' physical and psychological health and safety, which in turn is largely rooted within managerial practices (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). PSC is essentially an indicator of the true priorities of an organisation and/or institution in relation to competing climate interests (Idris *et al.*, 2011:2). An example of such an instance is a climate for psychological health vs. a climate for productivity (Idris *et al.*, 2011:2). PSC theory provides a fundamental framework for why jobs are designed the way they are, and why social relations are the way they are (Dollard *et al.*, 2019:12).

PSC is focused on shared norms and identities that can motivate team members in an organisation to adopt behaviours and views of a prototypical nature, such as ensuring the safety of team members in relation to interpersonal risk taking (Bradley *et al.*, 2012:156). PSC includes the protection and freedom of all stakeholders (employees, unions, and health and safety representatives) from social and psychological harm (Dollard & Karasek, 2010:209). In organisations, managers need to consider whether the overall climate of the organisation and/or institution is one that creates a fertile environment in which a safe climate can grow (Bradley *et al.*, 2012:156).

PSC is characterised by management commitment, management priority of PSC, organisational participation or involvement and organisational communication (Idris *et al.*, 2011:2). Therefore, PSC is largely determined by management, and in turn is indicative of management's prioritising of workers' psychological health (Idris & Dollard, 2014:291). PSC is concerned with management's commitment to and support for stress prevention, which include designing jobs that are not stressful to the employees (Idris & Dollard, 2014:291). The organisational context of a company influences job conditions, and as a result has an indirect impact on the mental health of employees (Idris & Dollard, 2014:293). Thus, top management commitment plays a crucial role in the creation of desired job conditions in order to reflect organisational aspirations (Idris & Dollard, 2014:293). When the psychological health of employees is prioritised by management, a parallel is created whereby management will provide employees with manageable job demands and adequate job resources. Organisational participation from both employees and employers alike is necessary in order to create a work climate that is perceived by all stakeholders as safe and adequate (Idris & Dollard, 2011; 2014:293).

PSC environments are closely related to effective organisational communication, which is how organisations capture the attention of employees regarding psychological health and well-being (Dollard & Bakker, 2010:579; Hall *et al.*, 2010:353; Nguyen *et al.*, 2017:1415). One of the manners in which the PSC ensures the safety of all stakeholders is by employing a two-way communication system between employees and managers so that individual employees and managers may be aware of stressful working conditions and in turn take rapid response action to preclude or control psychological risks (Bond *et al.*, 2010:37; Idris *et al.*, 2012:19–20). Furthermore, communication characterises the manner in which organisations listen and respond to the mental harm or psychological bullying of employees. Therefore, PSC focuses on emphasising the effectiveness of the process of communication between employees and senior management in the resolution of mental health problems and psychological bullying incurred in their workplace (Dollard & Bakker, 2010:579; Dollard & Karasek, 2010:208; Hall *et al.*, 2010:353).

According to Law *et al.* (2011:1783), an example of an unsafe work climate is when exposure to bullying and harassment at work becomes representative of a hazardous and unsafe working environment. Therefore, in terms of unsafe working environments, Law *et al.* (2011:1783) state that workplace bullying or harassment stands in strong contrast to a positive and safe PSC in the working environment. Other possible factors that may lead to a hazardous and unsafe climate in the working environment are mentioned by Law *et al.* (2011:1783) as being lack of supervisor

support, low procedural justice and inadequate job rewards. Procedural justice (low or high) in the working environment refers to the perceived fairness that is associated with procedural decisions such as promotion, pay selection, performance evaluation (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and employees' perceptions of the manner in which organisations allocate resources (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Supervisor support, or lack thereof, refers to employees' perceived social support from supervisors, including emotional and instrumental support. Organisational rewards, be it adequate or inadequate, also refers and relates to monetary control, esteem control and status control (Siegrist, 1996).

Another example of an unsafe work climate may be a situation where employees are receiving job demands (an antecedent of workplace bullying) from supervisors that surpass their ability and that are just not possible (Ciby & Raya, 2014:72). Each person has a breaking point. Employees who are subjected to continuous harassment or bullying in the workplace may reach a point where the bullying becomes too much and as a result, the victims of the bullying begin to break down (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). Psychosomatic impacts that may befall individuals include anxiety, physical health problems, stress and in some more severe cases critical health problems such as heart failure (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). Through the building of PSC and a strong climate for psychological health, workplace bullying in organisations may be prevented (Dollard *et al.*, 2017:844).

PSC is linked closely to perceived organisational support (POS). According to Eisenberger *et al.* and Rhoades (cited by Wang & Hsieh, 2013:786), POS is defined as employees' global beliefs in relation to the extent to which their employers care about their well-being and the value of their contribution to the organisation. According to Morrison (cited by Wan & Hsieh, 2013:786), POS is also considered a significant psychological factor that can prevent the silence(ing) of employees by stimulating their pro-social motives. Therefore, POS is how employees perceive their organisation, either in a favourable and positive manner or in an unfavourable and negative manner (Akhtar *et al.*, 2017:69). If employees know that there is an organisational support system in place to protect and support them, they feel more comfortable turning to management for help (Wang & Hsieh, 2013:786), whereas if the support is lacking, employees have a tendency to have a more negative perception of POS (Akhtar *et al.*, 2017:69).

Organisational support is therefore regarded as one of the resources made available by management for employees to enable them to have a feeling of confidence, security and

commitment to the organisation (Begley *et al.*, 2006:708; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1997:812). In relation to and alongside PSC, organisational support ensures that employees have a continuous positive experience with positive feelings and motives to commitment and engagement within the organisation. Furthermore, employees are ensured that antecedents of workplace bullying, such as job demand and effective leadership styles, are dealt with in a positive manner and do not lead to conflict or bullying in the workplace. It should therefore be the goal of the company to ensure that the perception of employees is one of continuous support and protection (Dollard & Bakker, 2010:579, Idris *et al.*, 2012:19–20, Nguyen *et al.*, 2017:1415).

Although substantial literature has established the link among psychological safety, team leading and team performance, there is a less clear understanding of how these relationships are improved or weakened (Harrell, 2020). The problem with PSC theory lies in the understanding of the safety climate itself. Climate strength is a factor that influences the relationship between climate safety variables and outcomes (Harrell, 2020). When the safety climate is strong, team members and researchers tend to agree on their perceptions of the climate (Harrell, 2020). The assumption is made in light of the understanding that the more psychologically safe a team feels, the more the team is able to learn, which as a result enhances their performance. When the safety climate is weak, team members and researchers tend to hold divergent perspectives of the safety climate. The opposite also stands to be true in this case, where if the employees feel psychologically unsafe, the team's ability to learn and work together towards a more productive working environment is affected negatively (Harrell, 2020).

This section outlined the theoretical approaches to workplace bullying. The Leymann model provided an understanding of the manner in which workplace mobbing (workplace bullying) has affected employees in different organisations through time. The Leymann model argues strongly against individual factors as antecedents of bullying, and rather focuses on organisational factors to investigate acts associated with bullying. The model also outlines the stages of bullying (mobbing). Through the discussion of both organisational factors and conflict escalation, Leymann outlines the fundamental underpinnings of workplace bullying. However, the Leymann model gives little to no attention to the social identity of the individual and instead focusses on organisational factors as antecedents of bullying. In order to ensure that the theoretical approach of this study is well rounded and cohesive, other theoretical approaches were explored to provide an in-depth understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon.

Tjafel's social identity theory was explored to determine the association between social identity and workplace bullying. Tjafel's social identity theory outlines the manner in which social identity may lead to certain individuals becoming bullies and other individuals becoming victims of bullying. The theory was created by Tjafel in order to understand the inbuilt tendencies of people to categorise themselves into one or more socially identifiable groups. Tjafel's social identity theory is based on the notion that workplace bullying is an interpersonal phenomenon that finds its basis within dynamic interaction between two or more parties. This theoretical approach allows for the understanding of the role that social identity plays in conflict situations such as bullying.

Glasl's conflict escalation model expands on Leymanns model. Glasl's conflict escalation model gives a step-by-step analysis of the manner in which conflict escalates in the working environment. Through the understanding of Glasl's model, a clear direction is given as to where workplace bullying takes place in the conflict escalation process and where power intervention becomes necessary.

The PSC theory provides a multilevel explanation of the causes of work stress and provides researchers with a theoretical model that can be used in order to monitor, benchmark and evaluate the causes of stress (e.g. workplace bullying) relating to work. The following section explores the different forms of workplace bullying in the working environment.

## **2.4 FORMS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING**

The following different forms of workplace bullying can manifest in the workplace and are explained below: dispute-related bullying, predatory bullying, scapegoating, workplace harassment, humour-orientated bullying, work-related stalking, the bullying of workplace newcomers, cyberbullying, judicial or system bullying, and retaliation from whistleblowing.

*Dispute-related bullying* is a bullying situation in which the targets feel that they have some ability to change or influence the circumstances under which they are being bullied (Pilch & Turska, 2015:62). Both parties carry some level of responsibility for the bullying that is taking place. Due to informal processes, the recognition of the actor's responsibilities is realised away from others' eyes (Pilch & Turska, 2015:62). This means that the outcome of the bullying situation is decided outside the organisational culture of the company. Dispute-related bullying is often the case of highly emotional interpersonal conflict that arises between workers (Leon-Perez *et al.*, 2015:4).

*Predatory bullying* can be defined as a non-ethical mechanism used by some workers to maintain their status. Furthermore, predatory bullying is a mechanism that is used to get rid of frustration and stress at work by enacting negative acts or behaviour towards other co-workers (Leon-Perez *et al.*, 2015:4). According to Einarsen (1999:23), predatory workplace bullying refers to cases where the person that has been personally victimised has done nothing provocative that in any way justifies the behaviour of the bully. Predatory bullying is often an accidental case of the victim finding him-/herself in a situation where the predator is trying to exploit an accidental victim into compliance or demonstrating his/her power (Einarsen, 1999:23).

*Scapegoating* is an act of workplace bullying or workplace harassment where the frustration of the perpetrator is displaced on an available target because the perpetrator feels that the victim deserves it (Thylefors, 1987). In the case of scapegoating, the targets are often chosen based on the fact that they present themselves as easy targets on which to unleash stress and frustration, thereby turning the victims into scapegoats (Brodsky, 1976). According to Matthiesen and Einarsen (2010:214), when frustration and stress are caused by a source that is inaccessible, too powerful to be attacked, indefinable or respected, the group or individual may turn their attention towards a less powerful individual than themselves, using that person as a scapegoat.

*Workplace harassment* is defined as problematic interpersonal workplace interactions between two or more individuals in which one or more employees feel that they have been victimised by one or more employees in the workplace (Claybourn, 2011:283). Workplace harassment takes on various forms, ranging from verbal harassment (such as being called names) to being sexually harassed (such as unwanted sexual interactions) (McDonald, 2012:2). The act of workplace harassment is intended to victimise certain individuals based on, among other factors, race and sex, hence making it part of workplace bullying. According to South African labour law, the act of workplace bullying, alongside any acts that may constitute some form of workplace harassment, is understood as an act of discrimination, rather than an illegal act (Department of Labour, 2010).

*Humour-orientated bullying* is an act presented in many workplaces and consists of interpersonal humour, ridiculing or teasing carried out by one individual on another individual (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214). Within the workplace, humour can be symmetrical in the sense that it is seen as joyful fun between employees; however, if such person-orientated humour is aimed at a

person that is in an out-group position, the individual in the out-group position may see the act as bullying (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214).

*Work-related stalking* is an act of workplace bullying in which one individual gives unwanted attention to another individual in a manner that is not appreciated or accepted by the targeted person (Post *et al.*, 2014:104). Most forms of stalking in the workplace consist of rejecting an ex-partner after divorce or separation, or bombarding or terrorising a former employee or current employee with text messages, emails or phone calls (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214).

*Bullying of newcomers* in the workplace is considered to be a form of workplace bullying, because the people enacting it often make use of tactics such as unwanted hazing in order to inflict damage on the targeted employees (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214). It is important to note that this type of bullying is seen as a rite of passage (Brodsky, 1976). In many working environments, the working culture revolves around the initiation of new employees as a 'rite' of passage as they start to become part of a certain organisational culture (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:204–208). This may include acts such as getting the new employees to do mundane and menial acts far below their capability or for which they were hired (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:204–208). Some examples may include taking the food orders of more senior employees, fetching coffee for the office, having to do other individuals' work for them without receiving acknowledgement for the task, etc. Duration in the sense of bullying of newcomers in the workplace is important. As has been previously mentioned, time is important in the determination of whether or not actions towards other individuals in the workplace can be considered as workplace bullying (Langos, 2012:285). If the action that is considered to be workplace bullying is only done for a short amount of time and then never again, the action itself cannot necessarily be considered as workplace bullying.

*Cyberbullying* is the act of intentional and repeated negative behaviour towards an individual or a group of individuals through the means of cyber-enabled devices in order to hurt or intentionally harm the said individual or group of individuals (Langos, 2012:285). The cyberbully will make use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram (to name a few) and communicational platforms such as email and SMS (to name a few) in order to attack their intended targets, either from a fake or mock profile or as themselves (Madan, 2014:1742). Cyberbullies have the power of anonymity behind them and as such can be considered extremely dangerous (Langos, 2012:285).

*Judicial or system bullying* occurs when employees feel that they are being bullied by the system itself (Matthiesen, S.B. & Bjørkelo, 2011:169). An example of this type of bullying in the workplace environment is when a system of a judicial nature has been put in place to benefit a certain percentage of employees and disadvantage the other part. For instance, a patriarchal system would benefit the men working in the company much more than it would benefit the female employees (Matthiesen, S.B. & Bjørkelo, 2011:169). This form of bullying can also be seen as *secondary bullying* in the workplace. Secondary bullying happens when the targets of the perceived bullying feel that they are being ignored by the employer, labour unions or even health and safety authorities when the targets make a complaint about bullying (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214).

*Whistle blowing* is an act by which the whistle-blower tries to stop the wrongdoing by informing authorities or other employees who they expect to stop the wrongdoing taking place, but instead gets targeted for raising a concern about the issue (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214). According to Ray (2006:438), a whistle-blower is a person that exposes negligence, danger and/or abuse such as incompetence that exists in the organisation or professional misconduct in the working environment. This type of bullying can best be understood as a shooting-the-messenger situation, which in layman's terms means they retaliate against the person who identified and exposed the wrongdoing (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214).

*Bullying of subordinates* often take place in the workplace environment due to the power relation that can be found between the individual known as the subordinate and the individual known as the superior (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:425–426). Subordinates are often bullied as a manner of instilling fear and showing power to teach them a lesson or to prove to them that they are not yet part of the organisational culture and as a result have no social standing (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214).

As indicated under section 2.2, workplace bullying can be categorised into two sub-groups, namely direct and indirect workplace bullying. Therefore, it should be noted that the act itself, and not necessarily the form alone, dictates to which sub-group the form of workplace bullying belongs. For example, stalking in the workplace via text messages, emails and phone calls can be regarded as direct bullying, but it can also be indirect when photos are taken without the knowledge of the victim or when anonymous unwanted gifts are given.

Whether in the working environment, social circumstances or private engagements with individuals, bullies can be identified by certain characteristics that form part of their socially constructed self. When looking at the victims of said bullies, the truth resonates equally to the victims, as they too hold certain characteristics that distinguish them from their perpetrators. The next section discusses the characteristics of the perpetrator and the target.

## **2.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERPETRATOR AND THE TARGET**

Workplace bullying is an act that includes one or more than one individual, within which there are certain roles played by those that are involved (Langos, 2012:258). The roles played by those involved can be attributed to the target (victim) and the perpetrator (bully).

### **2.5.1 *Characteristics of the perpetrator***

According to Indvik and Johnson (2012:74), bullies in the workplace are often individuals who are insecure and have a low sense of self-worth. These individuals then project their insecurities and inadequacies onto other individuals in the workplace. They enact bullying behaviours because they cannot deal with these inadequacies and insecurities in a constructive manner. Identifying a bully in the workplace is difficult, because the act of workplace bullying itself is difficult to identify. The reason for this is that workplace bullying can only be considered as such if it is done in a manner that is negative and that is aimed at causing the victim pain, repeatedly, over a period (Langos, 2012:258). The same can be said of the workplace bully. If the person who is being perceived as the perpetrator is an individual who makes a joke every now and again, he/she cannot be considered to be a workplace bully, as the act is not repeated over a set period (Giorgi, 2012:261). If an individual acts in such a manner that is aimed at hurting or continuously being negative towards another person, the individual committing these negative acts is then viewed as the perpetrator (or bully) (Dalton, 2007:89; Langos, 2012:260).

Typical workplace bullies are individuals who are very controlling and very dangerous; however, it should be noted that although they are bullies, they do not always target those less competent or less skilled than themselves (Indvik & Johnson, 2012:74). In some cases, it has been found that certain workplace bullies target those individuals in the workplace who hold a higher standing or have a more attractive self-identity than they do themselves. Workplace bullies often target individuals who are more competent than them due to jealousy and fear of inadequacy (Indvik &

Johnson, 2012:74). Workplace bullies are driven by the idea that there is limited rewards and praise for them, and they then believe that the only way of obtaining these rewards and praises is to push others down in order to elevate themselves (Dalton, 2007:89; Indvik & Johnson, 2012:74).

Georgakopoulos *et al.* (2011:10–11) identified three primary characteristics of a bully in the working environment. The first of these characteristics is physical, the second is psychological and the third is environmental. The bully who makes use of physical means in order to target certain individuals is often a person who uses physical aggression to abuse or inflict harm upon their victims (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:74). Bullies who make use of psychological means in order to harm or negatively impact their intended targets like to instil fear in their victims and like hurting their victims to see them in pain (Georgakopoulos *et al.*, 2011:10–11). Bullies in the working environment are influenced by certain surroundings in the workplace, such as toxic masculinity, organisational culture, etc. These are known as environmental influences. Environmental influences play a role in the manner in which a bully chooses to target individuals in the workplace (Georgakopoulos *et al.*, 2011:10–11). Environmental influences may determine whether the workplace bully chooses a physical or a psychological approach to the act to be inflicted on the intended target (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:74; Georgakopoulos *et al.*, 2011:10–11; Langos, 2012:285).

Bullies are not always individuals with a troubled past or individuals who have fallen victim to learned behaviour; there are other influences that can also cause an individual to be a bully (Madan, 2014:1742). A multitude of scenarios may or may not influence them. Baillien *et al.*, (2011:192) state that employees who have high-strain jobs or who work in a high-stress environment have tendencies towards exhibiting bullying behaviours. Furthermore, employees with low job autonomy and high-intensity workloads are much more likely to engage in bullying and negative behaviour towards other employees and people (Baillien *et al.*, 2011:192).

From the above, it is therefore evident that a perpetrator (the bully) is an individual in the working environment who makes use of negative behaviour in order to target and bully specific individuals or groups of individuals (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:69–70). Perpetrators are therefore identified mostly through their negative behaviour such as unnecessary anger, narcissism and vengeance as the most dominant identifiable characteristics (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:69–70).

The perpetrator is therefore the architect of the victimisation of other individuals in the working environment.

### **2.5.2      *Characteristics of the target***

The targets of the so-called workplace bully have their own set of characteristics that separates them from their perpetrators. However, before it is possible to distinguish these characteristics, it is important to note that attribution and reciprocity play a role when defining the characteristics of the target or victim. According to Bowling and Beehr (2006:998), it is possible for the target of the said bully to reciprocate with reaction that is directed towards the perpetrator, or in a more extreme case, the organisation, if they attribute the cause of said harassment to either one of the two. There are also multiple reasons to attribute blame to the organisation, because it can be seen as being responsible for both the actions and the presence of the perpetrator (Bowling & Beehr, 2006:998).

There are two main personality characteristics that play a role when determining what the target of a workplace bully would look like. In the one instance, the employee (potential target) seeks to avoid any instance of victimisation attempts, and by doing so may open up the door to the bully targeting him/her specifically (Bowling *et al.*, 2010:141). Furthermore, it is often the case that employees with low self-esteem and a low sense of self are easier to target than other employees.

According to Shin (2010:382), there are two types of victims. The passive victim is relatively withdrawn, socially anxious and lonely, whereas the aggressive victim is more sociable and less lonely (Shin, 2010:382). The passive victim is, however, according to Shin (2010:382), more likely to be a victim or target of bullies.

Bowling and Beehr (2006:998) link the following personal characteristics to targets (victims) of bullying: poor well-being, reduced self-esteem and increased depression. Other characteristics that are associated with victims of bullying include a person's gender, ethnicity, importance of religion and special needs (e.g. educational needs), disabilities, being in care, social position, family structure, etc. (Green, Collingwood & Ross, 2010:8).

Wimmir (cited by Himmer, 2016:7) found that statistically, men bully more than women do. In fact, the ratio showed that 71% of men were found to be bullies; in sharp contrast to only 29% of

women being found to be bullies (Wimmer, cited by Himmer, 2016:7). In random order, the traits of the target individuals were as follows: had few leadership skills, tended to be more submissive, tended to have fewer friends, were withdrawn, were less cooperative, were isolated and were less social and cooperative (Wimmer, cited by Himmer, 2016:7).

## **2.6 ANTECEDENTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING**

A multitude of antecedents in an organisation can enhance workplace bullying, including job demands, management and leadership styles of supervisors, lack of adaptation to change and interpersonal conflict (Ciby & Raya, 2014:69–70; Rai & Agarwal, 2018). These are discussed below.

### **2.6.1 Job demands**

Job demands on a team or on a project are one of the major sources of workplace bullying (Ciby & Raya, 2014:72; Tang, 2018:16, 27–28). Some of the most prevalent job demands are identified as unmanageable workloads and unrealistic deadlines; these in turn cause bullying behaviours such as forcing overtime, assigning menial tasks and excessive monitoring of employees (Ciby & Raya, 2014:73; Notelaers *et al.*, 2019). The problem associated with job demands is the possible strain that they put on employees (Baillien, De Cuyper *et al.*, 2011:193–194). Job demands as an antecedent of workplace bullying is also linked with management and leadership styles of supervisors. Moreover, in a study conducted by Ciby and Raya (2014:73) on the exploration of victims' experiences of workplace bullying, it was found that some of the respondents mentioned that project managers and team leaders had a deciding role in the changing of the demands expected from them when faced with a project. Some participants identified as being victims of workplace bullying reported that the unimaginable workloads had to do with severe lack of planning (from management's side) from the beginning of the project (Ciby & Raya, 2014:73). The victims' inability to adapt to changes in the working environment in terms of target expectations, deadlines, etc. was found to be a personality factor that stimulated workplace bullying (Ciby & Raya, 2014:72). Furthermore, it was found that the improper scheduling of project submissions, without due consideration given the complexity of the work, had also led to individuals feeling bullied by their respective supervisors and/or managers (Ciby & Raya, 2014:73).

### **2.6.2      *Management and leadership styles of supervisors***

It is often found that leaders are the main perpetrators of bullying in the working environment; however, little attention is given to the role management and leadership styles play in the perceptions of harassment and bullying (Hoel *et al.*, 2010:454, Mills *et al.*, 2019:159).

The nature of leadership styles may have an influence on the manner in which management deals with workplace bullying in the working environment. An autocratic leadership style is closely linked to workplace bullying (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74; Hoel *et al.*, 2010:455, Woodrow & Guest, 2017:221). This particular style is one in which supervisors and leaders are willing to apply force in order to achieve organisational goals (Hoel *et al.*, 2010:455, Woodrow & Guest, 2017:221). Therefore, the inevitable outcome of such leadership or management style is that the supervisor and/or leader is focused purely on job outputs and as such, provides employees with low job autonomy as well as a perceived hostile working environment (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74; Hoel *et al.*, 2010:455). Furthermore, these types of individuals making use of said leadership style also enact behaviours such as giving little to no support to subordinates and not recognising or supporting the opinions of their subordinates (Burns, 2017:37; Ciby & Raya, 2014:74). These behaviours may inadvertently lead to and instigate bullying behaviour at work.

Ciby and Raya (2014:74) also indicate that unsupportive and unprofessional behaviour of supervisors can result in workplace bullying. The study conducted by Ciby and Raya (2014:74) revealed that the research participants complained that they received no support from their supervisors in critical situations. Furthermore, it was found that the unprofessional behaviour of supervisors and leaders had been deemed unethical as well as unacceptable in terms of the norms and practices of society, and as such resulted in negative and unwanted bullying behaviour in the working environment (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74). Examples of said perceived bullying were persistently grabbing opportunities from other employees, repeatedly borrowing money without paying it back, presenting other employees' work as their own and taking credit for it, assigning menial tasks, verbal abuse and comments in meetings, withholding information, talking behind someone's back, bias and favouritism, to name a few (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74).

### **2.6.3      *Lack of adaptation to change***

An inability to adapt to changes in the working environment can result in workplace bullying. Furthermore, the inability to adapt to changes in the working environment reflects the personality

characteristics of the victim (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74, Scott, 2018:444). A study conducted by Glambek *et al.* (2014:255) investigating the relationship between workplace bullying and job insecurity and intention to leave revealed that employees who have an inability to adapt to change are more likely to leave the company within a period of six months after a bullying incident took place. Furthermore, according to the results of the study, bullied employees felt insecure about the content, continuation and permanence of their employment, and as such felt at risk of exclusion from working life. Ciby and Raya (2014:74) as well as Vilas-Boas (2019:108) argue that once employees encounter a situation where there is little to no adaptation to change in terms of their situation, the victims tend to join either a new organisation or a new project with a new supervisor in control. Bullying of this kind does not necessarily end once these victims move to new projects or organisations, as the victims of workplace bullying are often targeted beyond the scope of the team they are in. In turn, the employees who are victims of workplace bullying cannot escape their perpetrators by moving to a new project or organisation (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74, Vilas-Boas, 2019:108). The inability of victims to adapt to the behaviours and norms of a new organisation, new supervisor or new team can be a contributing factor that inevitably leads to the bullying phase (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74).

#### **2.6.4      *Interpersonal conflict***

According to the Collins Dictionary (2020), interpersonal conflict refers to conflict that arises within groups of people (two or more). Interpersonal conflict can lead to unnecessary conflict among employees, which can in turn lead to bullying behaviour (Skogstad *et al.*, 2011:478). Reasons for the emergence of interpersonal conflict in the working environment are related to work issues, personal issues, internal competition, jealousy and ego (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74, Notelaers *et al.*, 2018:1743). Due to the stress that goes hand in hand with job demand and expectation, the strain on the working relationship can be immense and, as a result, these stressed relationships with peers and supervisors may lead to the indirect stimulation of negative work behaviours (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74; Skogstad *et al.*, 2011:478). In conflict situations where negative behaviour is present, there are certain victims who choose to talk directly to their perpetrators, with the outcome often being more severe and intense negative behaviour (Ågotnes *et al.*, 2018:555; Ciby & Raya, 2014:74).

Workplace bullying is detrimental to both the company as well as the employees of the company. In the next section, the effects of bullying behaviours are discussed.

## **2.7 EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING**

Workplace bullying influences and affects both the organisation and the employees in many different ways. It can be extremely detrimental to the company's success and existence. Furthermore, workplace bullying can seriously affect the victims that are plagued thereby, ranging from a severe impact on employees' psychological health to employees leaving the company, and to a more dangerous outcome: some being willing to take their own lives. Another element that also plays a part in the prevalence of workplace bullying is the growing body of research seeking to highlight the way in which it also affects bystanders (Srabstein & Leventhal, 2010:403). According to Salin (cited by Mulder *et al.*, 2014:304–305), a bystander of workplace bullying is defined as an individual who is often aware of the situation that is taking place but does not intervene or interfere with the act itself. This section elaborates on the physical, psychological, economic and public effects of workplace bullying on the targets/victims, organisations and bystanders.

### **2.7.1      *Physical effect***

*The effect on the target.* Livingstone *et al.* (2016:11) found that the individual being targeted by the workplace bully is at risk of many problems that might influence his/her physical health. Some of these problems include heart palpitations, eating disorders and insomnia, to name but a few (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). Taken to its extreme, workplace bullying can have catastrophic critical health outcomes, such as psychosomatic breakdowns and even death due to heart attacks and suicide (Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11).

*The effect on the organisation.* On an organisational level, the physical effects that accompany workplace bullying can be detrimental to the prolonged existence of the organisation. One of the biggest problems that are encountered by the organisation is the lack of or decline in diverse and productive workplace culture (Branch *et al.*, 2013:280). If workplace bullying is not dealt with within the organisation, it can easily spill over to a reduction in productivity and work output. It also opens the door for top-down organisational bullying (Branch *et al.*, 2013:280).

*The effect on bystanders.* The physical effects of workplace bullying on the bystanders who see the acting rang from anxiety to fear and stress (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270). Anxiety and stress develop among bystanders due to the fear that they might be next. This is because these individuals are stuck with the dilemma of whether they need to report the perpetrator or stay quiet, because they are scared of becoming the victims themselves (Branch *et al.*, 2013:280).

### **2.7.2      *Psychological effect***

*The effect on the target.* The psychological effects of workplace bullying on the individual are similar to the physical effects, as it can also cause great harm to the individual's way of living and psychological well-being. Psychological issues that may befall the target of workplace bullying include the inability to concentrate in the working environment and a lack of motivation to take on new projects or even finish those that have already been started (Smit, 2014:67). Furthermore, the target may experience excessive fear in and away from the working environment, severe depression, panic attacks, the inability to remember certain information and, to an extreme extent, suicidal thoughts and suicide (Momberg, 2011:86–87).

*The effect on the organisation.* The organisation's public image may be brought into question if the act of workplace bullying against employees is dealt with insufficiently. This in turn may lead

to the perception that there is not enough being done to deal with the workplace bullying incident (Parzefall & Salin, 2010:768). This can lead to the employees seeking jobs elsewhere and leaving a company that has proven to be ill equipped for the problem at hand (Parzefall & Salin, 2010:768).

*The effect on bystanders.* One of the biggest effects of workplace bullying on bystanders is fear (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270). Bystanders are often too afraid to report events that are of this nature and as a result remain quiet (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270). Bystanders often have a diminished level in their willingness to help or intervene with the act itself (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270).

### **2.7.3      *Economic effect***

*The effect on the target.* The targets of workplace bullying may also experience economic pressures due to being targeted. The financial implication for the employee that is targeted by workplace bullying can be loss of income, human costs and additional costs (Giga *et al.*, 2008:14). Due to the absenteeism that can be expected due to workplace bullying, employees may experience loss of income in terms of salary reduction and bonus reduction due to the perceived outcome of poor work performance (Giga *et al.*, 2008:14). Furthermore, employees may leave the company before they have secured employment elsewhere, which can lead to loss of income (Giga *et al.*, 2008:14). Additional costs go hand in hand with the psychological well-being of the employee. These are extra costs, such as medical costs, medical appointments, medicine and hospital treatment, that the employee needs to pay in order to deal with the workplace bullying (Giga *et al.*, 2008:14).

*The effect on the organisation.* The organisation is also affected by workplace bullying in a way that costs the organisation money. Employees who feel that their grievances as far as workplace bullying is concerned are not being heard have the tendency to stay away from work and present work that is either of low quality or that slows production to the point where money stops being made (Giga *et al.*, 2008:15–16; Oladapo & Banks, 2013:110). Organisations may face additional costs such as harm to the health of the targeted individual, adverse effects on the targeted employee's productivity and morale, high employment turnover, workplace absenteeism, distraction from workplace goals and targets, and finally decreased levels of commitment from employees to the organisation (Giga *et al.*, 2008:15–19; Oladapo & Banks, 2013:110).

*The effect on bystanders.* In terms of the economic effect that workplace bullying has on bystanders, the effect is predominantly linked to the ability of the individual to function under such stressful circumstances (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270). These effects may include, but are not limited to, a lack of motivation, struggling with committing to tasks, lack of productivity and an overall decline in efficiency (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270). These effects can go as far as causing bystanders to quit their jobs to get away from bullying situations and as a result struggle from said decision financially.

#### **2.7.4      Public effect**

*The effect on the target.* Workplace bullying can complicate the way in which the individual is perceived in the working environment, but also how he/she is perceived in the public eye. The target can be seen as weak and lonely through the public eye. This is problematic, as it can cause anxiety and stress among targets who are known as being victims of workplace bullying in the public sphere (Oladapo & Banks, 2013:111). The reason for this is that all the before-mentioned effects, physical, psychological and economic, bleed into the public effect, as all of them speak to the way in which the individual perceives him-/herself in the public eye (Oladapo & Banks, 2013:111).

*The effect on the organisation.* One of the biggest problems that an organisation faces in terms of workplace bullying is the way in which it deals with said bullying in the public sphere. The reason that this may become a problem for the organisation is because its way of dealing with matters pertaining to workplace bullying is linked to the image the organisation portrays to the public (Giga *et al.*, 2008:15–19). When and if this does happen, the organisation is faced with either admiration or rejection from the public (Giga *et al.*, 2008:15–19). Furthermore, workplace bullying can have an influence on the level of productivity and quality of goods or services that are being provided by said organisation. This in turn can lead to a loss of income and public connectivity to the organisation and the brand that it embodies (Giga *et al.*, 2008:15–19).

*The effect on bystanders.* Bystanders who witness workplace bullying may struggle with commitment (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270). Due to the fear and anxiety that are coupled with being a bystander of workplace bullying, these individuals anticipate being targeted and as a result they struggle to help other individuals who are victims of workplace bullying (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011:270).

The effects that workplace bullying has on the working environment have been made clear; however, more research is required on the influences that workplace bullying has from both a global and a national perspective.

## **2.8 PREVALENCE OF WORKPLACE BULLYING: A GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

In the world of work, bullying has become a problem that is no longer deniable. It creates negative attitudes and has negative effects on employees who are being targeted, as alluded to in the section above. Workplace bullying has become the root of dysfunctional interorganisational conflict on both a global and a national level (Jacobson *et al.*, 2014:45). This section discusses the prevalence of workplace bullying on a global and a national level.

### **2.8.1 *A global perspective***

In terms of the global context, workplace bullying has been researched and investigated in abundance. According to Branch *et al.* (2013:280), the interest in workplace bullying emerged some three decades ago, with a large amount of research being conducted by many different scholars throughout the world in the past 20 years.

Internationally, workplace bullying is becoming a phenomenon that has raised many concerns for the livelihood of organisations as well as that of the employees who are being victimised in these organisations (Branch *et al.*, 2013:280–281). Although workplace bullying is defined and conceptualised differently across different countries, the organisational and psychological consequences are similar in nature (Jacobson *et al.*, 2014:45).

Workplace bullying is a difficult phenomenon to investigate on a global scale due to cultural differences that are encountered when investigating the phenomenon in different geographical locations (Jacobson *et al.*, 2014:45). In some countries, the phenomenon of workplace bullying is seen as an act of harassment, in others as an act of discrimination, in others an act that goes against one's basic human rights, etc. (Jacobson *et al.*, 2014:45).

In a study by Galanaki and Papalexandris (2013:2) in Greece, the dimensions of workplace bullying were explored through measuring the prevalence of workplace bullying in organisations. The respondents included in the study were 840 junior and middle managers from diverse sectors all over Greece. The authors noted that the cultural understanding of workplace bullying differed from community to community, which made it difficult to identify bullying incidents among their participants (Galanaki & Papalexandris, 2013:2). However, the results of the study showed that 60.5% of the respondents reported being bullied, and 31% of the respondents reported never being bullied at all (Galanaki & Papalexandris, 2013:12–13). It is important to note that of the 31% respondents reported never been bullied, 22.7% did indeed admit to being bullied in accordance with the bullying definition provided by the researchers (Galanaki & Papalexandris, 2013:12–13).

Hollis (2017a:64–65) investigated the prevalence of workplace bullying across 175 universities and colleges across the USA. A total of 355 respondents participated in the study. The results of the study showed that 51% (181) of the respondents reported being bullied, 24% (84) admitted to taking sick time due to bullying, whereas 26% (93) admitted to resigning and/or quitting their jobs due to bullying.

A study conducted by An and Kang (2016:234) investigated the relationship between organisational culture and workplace bullying among Korean nurses. In total, 297 participants from different hospitals in Busan, South Korea, participated in the research. An and Kang (2016:236) found that 21.4% of the participants from tertiary hospitals reported being bullied; however, only 9.8% of nurses working in secondary hospitals reported being bullied. Furthermore, the results showed that workplace bullying was at its highest in the emergency department, with 34.1% of the participants reporting that they were bullied extensively (An & Kang, 2016:236). The study also found that among participating factors such as religion and gender, the prevalence of workplace bullying among participants was linked to the area (different departments in hospital) in which they worked and the hospital for which they worked (An & Kang, 2013:236).

In terms of workplace bullying being an international phenomenon, the above-mentioned examples give a clear indication that workplace bullying is indeed seen as a problematic phenomenon on an international scale. Workplace bullying as a global phenomenon needs to be understood in terms of how it is dealt with in other countries. In certain countries, there is no particular law or legislation that deems the act itself as being unlawful (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015). Furthermore, there is little to no system in place, globally, to deal with

workplace bullying in its entirety (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015). Smit (2014:251) states that globally, the act of workplace bullying in itself is considered to be a violation, and as such cannot be perceived as an act that is against the law. Countries such as Sweden see the act or phenomenon of workplace bullying as victimisation, whereas in countries such as the USA the act itself is seen as discrimination towards or aimed specifically at certain individuals or groups of individuals (based on protected groups in terms of race, religion, etc.) (Smit, 2014:251). In countries such as the UK, there is legislation in place that prohibits the act, but that does not necessarily deem the act itself as unlawful (Smit, 2014:251). In Chapter 3 there is a further discussion of the legalities regarding workplace bullying.

### **2.8.2      *A national perspective***

Steinman (2003), in a study for the International Labour Organization (ILO), found that bullying is a prevalent and serious issue among the working population of South Africa. Among the sectors identified as the most prone to bullying in the workplace was the health sector, the educational sector, the sectors carrying out inspections as well as sectors working with mentally ill and unstable individuals (Steinman, 2003). Steinman (2003) indicated that South Africa was lagging behind in the international sphere on research conducted into workplace violence. However, today, there is an increased awareness of and concern about the phenomenon of workplace bullying in the country.

Authors such as Momberg (2011:41–42) and Jacobs and De Wet (2015:32) are in agreement that workplace bullying continues to be a problem in the country. According to Momberg (2011:41–42), there is a trend in South Africa among researchers that acknowledges that workplace bullying is a problem in South Africa. However, Momberg (2011:41–42) acknowledges that the country is lacking in its efforts to research the phenomenon within its own borders in relation to the rest of the world.

Jacobs and De Wet (2015:32) conducted a study investigating the effects of workplace bullying on school level educators at the e-School of Open Learning at the University of the Free State. Among the 999 respondents of the study, 850 indicated being victims of workplace bullying. The results further showed that 49.5% of the respondents mentioned that they replayed the moment and the effects of the bullying encounter long after it had taken place. Furthermore, the results showed that between 30 and 39% of the respondents admitted that they struggled to be

productive, as they could not focus on their work as a result of workplace bullying (Jacobs & De Wet, 2015:51–52).

A study by Visagie *et al.* (cited by Smith, 2014:85), investigating the prevalence and experiences of workplace bullying among employees at a South African mining company, found that up to 27.7% of employees in the mining sector reported being bullied in the six months leading up to the specific study. Furthermore, Visagie *et al.* (cited by Smith, 2014:85) found that 46.5% of employees witnessed bullying taking place in the working environment. According to Visagie *et al.* (cited by Smith, 2014:85), one out of two employees was witnesses to other employees being bullied in the workplace.

Cunniff and Mostert (2012:2) investigated the prevalence of workplace bullying among South African employees. The population of the study consisted of employees who worked in six different sectors in all nine provinces of South Africa: call centres, financial, mining, manufacturing, and academic and government. The authors made use of convenience sampling and 13 911 respondents participated in the research. The results of the study indicated that 4% of the respondents reported being bullied 'often', whereas 31.1% reported being bullied 'always' (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012:8–9). Furthermore, the results showed that 28.4% of the respondents reported being bullied directly, in comparison to 23.8% of the respondents being bullied indirectly (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012:8–9). The study further indicated that 30.5% of the respondents reported being bullied by their supervisors, whereas 15.7% reported being bullied by other employees and colleagues (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012:8–9). The authors also reported that direct bullying tactics by supervisors accounted for 26.7% of the respondents' experiences compared to 17% who reported being indirectly bullied by their supervisors (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012:8–9). Furthermore, the authors indicated that 14.1% of the respondents reported being bullied indirectly by their fellow employees and colleagues, compared to 6.1% who reported being bullied directly by their colleagues (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012:8–9).

In an article by Thompson (2019) in the *Financial Times*, focusing on sexual harassment and bullying in the legal profession, a global survey on 7 000 people in the working environment yielded the results that bullying alongside sexual harassment is rife within the legal professions of the world. It was found that workplace bullying in legal professions is a problem in South Africa as well. According to Thompson (2019), preventative methods such as workplace training had shown to have little to no effect on bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. According

to Christensen (2019), the problem of bullying in the South African working environment has become so out of control that it costs the country's economy an estimated R40 billion a year. Workplace bullying can be regarded as one of the biggest contributors to work-related stress, not only in South Africa, but also across the world (Christensen, 2019). According to Darby (2019), bullying in working environments is out of control and there not enough is being done to protect employees in the fight against bullying behaviour.

Although workplace bullying is a problematic phenomenon in the working environment of South African organisations and institutions, the problem itself is exacerbated by ineffective human resource policies (Smit, 2015:5). When effective policy making does not prevail, the possibility of employees being bullied by their co-workers, senior management, etc. becomes much larger than if the right policies were in place (Burke & Mouton, 2013:1).

From the discussion above, it is apparent that workplace bullying is both a global and a local problem. The following section explores the prevalence of workplace bullying in higher education institutions.

## **2.9 WORKPLACE BULLYING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Workplace bullying in higher education institutions in South Africa has been grossly underresearched; few studies report on the prevalence of workplace bullying among employees at higher education institutions. According to Jacobs and Teise (2019:1–3), teachers and educators across South Africa experience exceptionally high levels of bullying in the working environment, especially bullying specific to their profession. Ngwane (2018:163–164) confirmed that workplace harassment and workplace bullying exist in South African universities – among staff members and also those who are in supervising and managerial roles (Ngwane, 2018:163–164).

According to Keashly and Neuman (2010:53), the weapons of choice at the disposal of bullies within the context of higher education are those that target specific attributes of those being targeted by the intended bullying. Examples of these include behaviours that are designed to attack or undermine professional standing, competence and authority, or the act of impeding access to fundamental resources for their work (access to strong students, money, time, space, etc.) (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:53). The chances of other behaviour such as shouting,

threatening of physical harm, insults, etc. being seen in these sorts of institutions are very slim (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:54). The reasoning behind this is quite simple: If clear evident acts of bullying can be observed by other employees, the chances of backlash from other employees witnessing such acts becomes a reality. However, if other methods are used, such as those that have been mentioned, the acts themselves can be viewed as simply being a part of the working environment and culture to which these individuals belong (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:54).

In a study conducted by Hollis (2015:1–2) across various states in the USA, the severity of workplace bullying and its effects on the staff in higher education institutions were indicated. In the study, Hollis (2015:1–2) found that 62% of higher education administrators had witnessed or experienced workplace bullying in the 18 months prior to the study. Furthermore, it was found that almost half of the respondents sent their completed surveys to a remote location in order to avoid responding on campus (Hollis, 2015:5). Hollis (2015:5) also found that the majority of the respondents admitted to being bullied for more than two years, with 27% of the respondents affirming that they had been bullied for more than three calendar years. Hollis (2015:5) further states that when employees were asked about avoiding their bullies, 23% of the respondents admitted to avoiding their bullies at least an hour a week. The study also found that 28% of the respondents felt that the organisation they work for was apathetic in dealing with the bullying (Hollis, 2015:5). In sharp contrast, 19% of the respondents reported that the organisation sided with the bully and not with them as victims (Hollis, 2015:5). Hollis (2015:2) states that the workplace bully is a petty thief who takes cash and steals the productivity of the institution by causing, among other problems, employee disengagement.

Van der Nest *et al.* (2018:2) give an account of the situation that is facing the higher education institutions of South Africa. Van der Nest *et al.* (2018:2) conducted a study at the University of Pretoria on the experiences of staff being bullied in a learner-to-teacher environment. From the study it was evident that workplace bullying has more than one dimension and therefore needs to be understood as a multi-dimensional problem (Van der Nest *et al.*, 2018:2). The study showed that an immense number of teaching staff are being bullied in South Africa, not only by their superiors and peers, but also by the students whom they teach. A study conducted by Scott and Kahn (2017:24), for instance, also revealed incidents of bullying between medical students and staff. The bullying of these staff members and students by other students and staff has led to many of them either leaving the field of medicine all together or never even entering the actual working environment due to fear of such conditions in the workplace (Scott & Kahn, 2017:24).

Ngwane (2018:163) researched workplace harassment and its impact on staff performance at a South African higher education institution. In total, 200 employees of varying academic levels took part as respondents in the study. The author came to the understanding that there is a clear confirmation of the existence of workplace bullying and its negative effects in higher education institutions (Ngwane, 2018:163–164). The results showed that workplace bullying existed at the university where the study was conducted. Furthermore, the authors found that 55% of the respondents were victims of workplace bullying, a further 68% knew victims (co-workers) of workplace bullying and 55% of the staff knew the perpetrators of workplace bullying (Ngwane, 2018:174). Fifty-five per cent of the respondents agreed that the most common workplace bullying that occurred was between supervisors and subordinates, with 41% of the respondents agreeing that bullying by staff of other staff members was also relatively common (Ngwane, 2018:174). Another statistic that is also relevant in this study is that 62% of the respondents agreed that most bullying occurs within departments, whereas 54% agreed that most bullying occurs across the institution (Ngwane, 2018:174). The author came to the conclusion that the findings of the study support the need for a working environment that is transparent, equal and respectful to human dignity (Ngwane, 2018:163–164). Furthermore, the findings indicated that the impact of workplace bullying is not only detrimental to employees, but to the institution as well (Ngwane, 2018:163–164). The author concluded with the final thought that should changes not be implemented at the institution, the phenomenon would reach a critical point and could have an even more devastating effect (Ngwane, 2018).

Jacobs and Teise (2019) investigated educators' subjective experiences of workplace bullying within a perceived neo-liberalist education system. Data were collected from four different participants using unstructured interviews. They found that educators agreed that unfair demands and expectations, top-down decision making, unrealistic pressure to perform, not receiving correct information on time, being treated as mindless sources of information and autocratic management styles were among the main antecedents of workplace bullying in the South African educational sector (Jacobs & Teise, 2019:1).

Be it from a global or a local perspective, workplace bullying in higher education institutions can lead to catastrophic outcomes if not handled in the right manner. Bullying that occurs among faculty members has an immense impact on performance/productivity, job satisfaction, abrasive interactions with students and turnover (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:54). Productivity becomes a

problem when and if faculty members withdraw from their efforts in scholarship; this then leads to a serious reduction in merit pay, tenure and/or promotion. However, this is one part of the problem; workplace bullying also affects the ability of faculty members to mentor graduate students and it may shift the advising loads to their other colleagues (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:54).

From the above it is evident that workplace bullying also exists within the confines of the higher education sphere. The examples and discussions given above are testament to how detrimental workplace bullying can be to higher education institutions both globally and nationally. Therefore, it can be concluded that workplace bullying can be damaging to the targets and bystanders, but it can also affect the learning environment and the institution itself (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:55). The next section discusses the association between selected socio-demographic variables and workplace bullying.

## **2.10 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF WORKPLACE BULLYING**

This section discusses the association between selected socio-demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, level of education, length of employment and type of employment) and workplace bullying.

### **2.10.1 Gender and workplace bullying**

The term 'gender' refers to the social and cultural distinctions between women and men, while 'sex' refers to the biological differences between women and men (Salin, 2021:2). According to Salin and Hoel (2013:236) a large number of studies focusing on the association between gender and workplace bullying often provide ambiguous or conflicting results. For example, Nielsen *et al.* (2010:169) found that the use of non-random samples over random samples tends to account for higher prevalence rates for women being bullied over men. According to Leo *et al.* (2014:6059), the reason for this tendency might be because different studies conceptualise 'gender' and 'bullying' differently and they might be using different measurement methods.

In a study conducted by Botha (2019:22) investigating employees' perceptions and experiences of bullying in the workplace in a South African setting, the author found no significant relationship between gender and workplace bullying. In contradiction, a study conducted by Chan *et al.* (2019:6) investigating the prevalence of workplace bullying and its association with socio-economic factors and psychological distress among 5 235 Malaysian employees revealed that

there were clear gender differences in terms of the prevalence of work bullying. The authors found that bullying may not be a gender-neutral phenomenon, as a higher portion of female employees reported being bullied in comparison to their male counterparts (Chan *et al.*, 2019:6). Gender differences in the prevalence of workplace bullying were also confirmed by studies conducted by Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:102) and Salin (cited by Jones, 2006). Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:102) conducted a study focusing on the prevalence of workplace bullying among Spanish employees and found that women experienced higher incidents of bullying than men in the workplace. Similarly, Salin (cited by Jones, 2006) found, in a study conducted among business professionals forming part of the Finnish association of graduates in economics and business administration, that women experienced more workplace bullying than men.

According to Eagly *et al.* (cited by Salin, 2021:6), men might find admitting victimisation threatening to their self-image and may refrain from reporting a bullying incident. This might be an explanation of the lower prevalence rate of workplace bullying among men (Namie & Namie, 2018:57).

### **2.10.2 Age and workplace bullying**

Previous research report mixed results on the effect of age on workplace bullying. López-Cabarcos *et al.* (2017:1023) notes that there is uncertainty in the scientific community regarding the validity of age as a characteristic that makes individuals more susceptible to workplace bullying behaviour.

Botha (2019) investigated the perceptions and experiences of workplace bullying among students enrolled for the Masters of Business Administration qualification at selected business schools in South Africa and found no significant relationship between age and workplace bullying. Similarly, Skuzińska *et al.* (2020:16) found no clear correlation between age and workplace bullying. The study investigated the moderating role of the individual (gender, age, education) and occupational (employment duration, workplace position, duration of negative behaviour and the number of perpetrators) characteristics of victims and perpetrators of negative workplace behaviours in the relationship between workplace bullying and mental health. The study was conducted among administrative staff, police officers and hospital staff of a city in northern Poland (Skuzińska *et al.*, 2020:15). López-Cabarcos *et al.* (2017:1028) explored the psychological risk factors related to workplace bullying among Spanish prison employees; the results indicated a lack of personal or

work recognition as well as work overload to be highly important antecedents of bullying, regardless of the age group.

Einarsen and Skogstad (1996:198) explored the prevalence of harassment and workplace bullying in various Norwegian professions and organisations; the results indicated that older individuals experienced higher levels of bullying. In a study conducted by Hoel and Cooper (2000:12) among 5 288 individuals from more than 70 different organisations in Manchester, England, the authors found that middle-aged and younger employees experienced higher rates of bullying. Concomitantly, a study by Mostert and Cunniff (2012:6) among 13 911 employed individuals across six different sectors of work (financial, mining, government, manufacturing, academic and call centres) in South Africa found that younger employees experienced higher rates of bullying in the workplace, whereas older employees experienced significantly lower instances of bullying.

In a study by Lange *et al.* (2019:242) among 4 143 employees working in all work sectors across Germany it was found that older employees reported significantly fewer experiences of bullying. The study focused on prevalence estimates and the role of the perpetrator in the German workforce. Lange *et al.* (2019:242) concluded that there were significant differences between the three age groups (31–40 years; 41–50 years; 51–60 years) for both bullying by co-workers and bosses. The study reported that, when focusing on supervisors/bosses as the perpetrators in the working environment, young employees were targeted more severely than their older counterparts (Lange *et al.*, 2019:242). Similarly, Ariza-Montes *et al.* (2017:1126) found that age is a decisive factor in the occurrence of harassment at work, such as workplace bullying. The study investigated workplace bullying among hospitality employees across Europe. The results of the study indicated that 74.1% of employees experienced bullying in their professions. Furthermore, the results indicated that the average age for bullied hospitality employees was 36, with the average age of employees who did not experience workplace bullying 38.8 years (Ariza-Montes *et al.*, 2017:1121).

### **2.10.3 Marital status and workplace bullying**

Previous studies indicate different and conflicting results on the relationship between marital status and workplace bullying. Botha (2019:25) found no significant relationship between workplace bullying and marital status in her study.

In contrast, Yang and Zhou (2021:27), in their study on workplace bullying among nurses in China, found that marital status was a determining factor in the bullying process at work. The results of the study indicated that married nurses were more likely to experience workplace bullying (Yang & Zhou, 2021:27). Similarly, in a study by Yadav *et al.* (2020:27), focusing on the impact of workplace bullying on turnover intention, it was found that among Indian school teachers, marital status affects the likelihood of teachers in Indian schools to experience workplace bullying. Furthermore, the results indicated that married women who have a longer work tenure tended to be least affected by workplace bullying (Yadav *et al.*, 2020:27). Coherently, Giorgi *et al.* (2013:190) found that married individuals reported lower instances of workplace bullying than unmarried individuals. Giorgi *et al.* (2013:190) explored the organisational and personal determinants of workplace bullying among a sample of Japanese employees.

Asakura *et al.* (cited by Giorgi *et al.*, 2013:188) argue that married adults might experience less workplace bullying than those who are single or divorced. The results of the study showed that marriage can be a source of support for such bullying experiences while maintaining the integrity of the victim. In Japan, marriage is a source of social respectability, where bullying towards those who are not married might be perceived as more acceptable (Asakura *et al.*, cited by Giorgi *et al.*, 2013:188).

#### **2.10.4      *Level of education and workplace bullying***

Few studies have found a relationship between level of education and workplace bullying. Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:96) noted the inconclusive results of previous studies investigating the relationship between level of education and workplace bullying.

Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:101) investigated the relationship between workplace bullying and level of education among a sample of 103 employees from the Madrid Autonomous Region (Spanish employees), where the results indicated that individuals with “elementary education” reported higher levels of bullying than those with “medium” or “higher education” (Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2008:101). According to Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:104), those with higher levels of education may experience less bullying, as education can offer security through supplying skills to manage conflict. Niedhammer *et al.* (2007:348) investigated the prevalence of workplace bullying among 3 132 men and 4 562 women of the general working population in the

southeast of France and found that unskilled workers experienced higher incidences of bullying than those with qualifications or higher levels of education. Cunliff and Mostert (2012:8) also found that South Africans with tertiary education reported less incidences of workplace bullying than those with only secondary education. According to Cunliff and Mostert (2012:4), those with lower education levels could experience more workplace bullying due to more educated individuals feeling more skilled and superior.

#### **2.10.5 Length of employment and workplace bullying**

Previous studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between length of employment and workplace bullying. Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:102) found statistical significance in the relationship between length of employment and workplace bullying among a sample of Spanish employees. Those employed for 16 to 42 years reported lower instances of workplace bullying than those employed for 8 to 15 years. In addition, those employed from 8 to 15 years reported lower instances of workplace bullying than those employed for 5 to 7 years (Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2008:102). Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:104) noted that with the increase in time and experience at work, the risk of workplace bullying tended to decrease. Likewise, a study conducted by Owoyemi (2011:75) among 452 emergency service organisation employees in the UK found that individuals working in an emergency service organisation in the UK from one to five years reported higher incidences of bullying at work than those who have been employed longer. Similarly, a study by Apaydin (2012:9652) among 320 volunteer faculty members on the relationship between workplace bullying and organisational cynicism in Turkish public universities found that those who have worked from 6 to 15 years at a public Turkish university experienced workplace bullying at the university. Furthermore, the results indicated that faculty members between the ages of 31 and 35 and who are 41 and above were also subjected to workplace bullying on a regular basis (Apaydin, 2012:9652). Awai *et al.* (2021:81) investigated the prevalence of workplace bullying and its associated factors among 178 hospital workers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The authors reported higher rates of bullying among individuals employed for 10 years or less than those employed for more than 10 years.

In contradiction, a study by Fontes *et al.* (2019:538) among 419 nurses across Brazil on the relationship between leadership, bullying in the workplace and turnover intention revealed higher rates of bullying among those employed for 5 to 10 years than those employed for less than a year.

### **2.10.6     *Type of employment and workplace bullying***

Previous studies exploring the relationship between the type of employment contract and workplace bullying reported indecisive results (Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2008:96).

Kivimäki *et al.* (2000:657) investigated workplace bullying and sickness absence among a cohort of 674 male and 4 981 female hospital employees aged 19–63 years across Finish organisations. The authors found no significant differences between the workplace bullying experienced by temporary and permanent employees.

In contrast, Hoel and Cooper (2000:12) found that permanent employees experienced higher instances of workplace bullying than temporary workers. The authors investigated destructive conflict and bullying at work across various professions and organisations in Manchester. Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:102) found higher rates of workplace bullying among Spanish workers in Europe with temporary contracts than those with permanent contracts. Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:104) subsequently argue that workplace bullying can be influenced by “employment flexibility”. Notelaers *et al.* (2010:6) explored risk groups and risk factors of workplace bullying among 8 985 Flemish respondents across 86 firms. The results indicated that temporary employees may be more at risk due to being seen as a “potential disturbance” to the social setting of permanent employees. Temporary employees may be too afraid to defend themselves when conflict arises with a permanent employee (Notelaers *et al.*, 2010:23).

From the above discussion it is evident that socio-demographic variables influence how workplace bullying is perceived and experienced in the working environment. The examples discussed above gave a clear outline on how socio-demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, level of education, length of employment and type of employment) have an effect on how employees are targeted and become victims of workplace bullying in the working environment.

## **2.11     CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided a theoretical framework of workplace bullying and examined the concepts and theoretical underpinnings of workplace bullying to obtain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. The opening section of this chapter provided a clear understanding of the term ‘workplace bullying’. Workplace bullying is an act of intentional aggressive behaviours/acts carried

out by an individual or group on another individual or group that cannot defend or protect themselves against the negative act being enacted upon them. These negative acts are then repeated and continue over a certain period, and as a result, are seen as workplace bullying. Furthermore, this section and the section that followed differentiated between two different categories of workplace bullying, namely direct and indirect bullying. Direct workplace bullying is understood as direct contact between the target and the victim substantiated by acts such as verbal threats or physical abuse, while indirect workplace bullying is considered as indirect actions by the bully that are intended to affect the targeted victim and is associated with behaviours such as the spreading of rumours. Workplace bullying was therefore identified as a multidimensional concept with different conceptual underpinnings.

The third section provided an in-depth analysis of the theoretical approaches to workplace bullying. The following theoretical approaches were explored, as they provided a comprehensive understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon from a theoretical viewpoint: the Leymann model, Tajfel's social identity theory, the conflict escalation model of Glasl and PSC theory. The Leymann model was created to understand the role that mobbing plays in the working environment. Leymann uses the term 'mobbing' synonymously to all other forms of workplace bullying/harassment in the working environment and defines mobbing as social interaction between individuals or groups, where one individual or group is attacked by another individual or group, repeatedly and over a period. Tajfel's social identity theory was created to understand the inbuilt tendencies of people to categorise themselves into one or more socially identifiable group. Through the study of the socially constructed self, Tajfel's social identity theory seeks to understand the socially constructed relationships between one individual or group and another individual or group. Furthermore, through studying the socially constructed self within the working environment, intergroup and interpersonal relationships and conflicts between employees can be better identified and understood. The conflict escalation model of Glasl was to assist with the analysis of conflict situations. Glasl's conflict escalation model explores the different phases and stages of conflict escalation in the working environment. Furthermore, the conflict escalation model gives an in-depth understanding of exactly where workplace bullying takes place and the stages that lead up to the workplace bullying, as well as those that come after. PSC theory is used as a theoretical model to evaluate, monitor and benchmark the causes of stress in the workplace, such as workplace bullying. All of the above-mentioned theories were explored in order to afford the study at hand with a strong theoretical foundation and understanding of workplace bullying.

In the fourth section the researcher discussed the different forms of workplace bullying, which included whistleblowing, workplace stalking, cyberbullying, dispute-related bullying, workplace harassment, humour-orientated bullying, scapegoating, judicial or system bullying, and predatory bullying. The existence of bullying in the workplace is supported by this section. Ultimately, the above-mentioned forms of workplace bullying can do serious harm to those being victimised in the workplace, and as a result must be understood by those combatting them in the working environment.

The fourth section dealt with the characteristics of both the workplace bully and the target (victim) of workplace bullying. The literature that was consulted identified the workplace bully as an individual that is insecure and has a low sense of self-worth. Furthermore, bullies are viewed from three characteristic types known as the physical, psychological and environmental. The characteristic associated with the physical bully is that of physical aggression to abuse or inflict harm upon their victims. The psychological bully is characterised by bullies who like to inflict and instil fear in their victims and like hurting their victims to see them in pain. The environmental bully is characterised by certain surroundings in the workplace, such as toxic masculinity and organisational culture. On the other hand, the target of workplace bullying is differentiated by two different types of victims, namely the passive and the aggressive victim. The passive victim is relatively withdrawn, socially anxious and lonely, while the aggressive victim is more sociable and less lonely.

In the sixth section, the chapter reported on the different antecedents of workplace bullying. According to the literature reviewed, job demands, management and leadership styles of supervisors, lack of adaptation to change and interpersonal conflict are the main antecedents of workplace bullying. Job demands such as unmanageable workloads and unrealistic deadlines can be seen as workplace bullying. These acts lead to forced overtime or the assigning of menial tasks. The nature of leadership styles as well as unsupportive and unprofessional behaviour of managers and supervisors can result in workplace bullying. Lack of adaptation to change and the inability to change in the working environment can result in workplace bullying. According to the presented literature, the researcher found that employees who cannot adapt to change are more likely to leave the company and are also more likely to be bullied by other employees. Interpersonal conflict is also identified as being an antecedent of workplace bullying. Interpersonal conflict can lead to unnecessary conflict among employees and in turn to workplace bullying.

Interpersonal conflict can emerge for many reasons related to the working environment, such as personal issues and internal competition among employees.

The seventh section of this chapter discussed the effects (physical, psychological, economic and public) that workplace bullying has on bystanders, targets and organisations. This section outlined the manner in which workplace bullying affects individuals being bullied at work, its effect on individuals who are witness to the bullying and how workplace bullying can influence and change the public view of organisations where the phenomenon has occurred.

In the eighth section of this chapter, the researcher discussed the prevalence of workplace bullying from a global and national perspective. From the literature provided in this section, the conclusion was drawn that workplace bullying is a phenomenon that is not geographically limited in its occurrence. The section provided a multitude of examples that showed the existence of workplace bullying on an international scale. The same can be said for the national perspective of this section. The researcher used different studies by different authors in order to identify workplace bullying as a problem in South Africa and South African institutions alike. Furthermore, the section emphasised the importance of the emergence of workplace bullying as a detrimental phenomenon not only locally, but also internationally.

The ninth section of this chapter shifted the focus to workplace bullying in higher education institutions. The researcher identified the phenomenon as being problematic in tertiary institutions across the world. The researcher presented findings from different studies that proved that workplace bullying in tertiary institutions have similar effects on employees to that of employees from other sectors where bullying is more prevalent.

The tenth and final section of this chapter focused on identifying the socio-demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, level of education, length of employment and type of employment) that have an influence on workplace bullying.

An important note to make as the chapter draws to a close is that workplace bullying, although researched internationally, is a problem that is underresearched in South Africa. Therefore, the need to investigate and research this particular phenomenon has become paramount in successfully addressing this inherently negative phenomenon across the world and working

environments alike. Consequently, the next chapter discusses and elaborates on the legislative responses as well as intervention measures to combat workplace bullying.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **COMBATting WORKPLACE BULLYING: LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION MEASURES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 provided a theoretical framework of workplace bullying and outlined the role it plays in organisations and institutions. The chapter also explored the prevalence, nature and extent of workplace bullying on a global and national level as well as in higher education institutions.

From the previous chapters it is evident that workplace bullying is a growing concern and may have detrimental consequences for individuals and organisations alike. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that managers and human resource practitioners effectively address workplace bullying. Accordingly, this chapter outlines and discusses measures to be considered in combatting workplace bullying. Firstly, the statutory and legal perspectives on workplace bullying in South Africa are outlined. This is followed by a discussion of the factors that need to be considered in interventions in workplace bullying.

#### **3.2 THE STATUTORY AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVES ON WORKPLACE BULLYING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa is a country that ensures the protection of its citizens through legislation and policy. The Cambridge University (2013:n.p.) refers to legislation as the process of constructing laws through government suggestion and validated by an official parliament. Therefore, legislation can be seen as the written laws (rules) of a country; people living in the said country should live and abide by these laws (rules). Unfortunately, there is no specific legislation that deals with workplace bullying in South Africa (Smit, 2014:229). Furthermore, according to Smit (2014:229), South Africa has little to no clarity on where bullying in the workplace should be located in the legal framework of the country. There is also a lack of clarity on the manner in which legal dispensation should provide protection for the targets of workplace bullying and bullying on the whole (Smit, 2014:229–230).

In order to understand the legal parameters of workplace bullying in South Africa, the legal system in the country should first be explained. South Africa is a country that makes use of Roman-Dutch law, or common law, as it is known among professionals in South Africa (Smit, 2014:232). In South Africa, one of the biggest protectors of the employee is labour law (Smit, 2014:234). Labour law is comprised of common law, legislation, international labour law standards, collective agreements, the provisions of the contract of employment, constitutional provisions and lastly customs and practice (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:4). In the section to follow, firstly, the role played by the ILO in South Africa is explained, followed by a discussion of the Constitution of South Africa and applicable labour law.

### **3.2.1      *The role of the International Labour Organization***

The ILO is comprised of many different countries and South Africa was one of the first countries to have joined the ILO in the year 1994 (Steinman, 2003:2–5). The ILO aims to give equal voice to governments, workers and employers to guarantee that the views of social partners are thoroughly echoed in labour standards and in shaping programmes and policies (ILO, 2020b). The main objective of the organisation is to encourage decent employment opportunities, strengthen the dialogue on work-related issues, promote rights at work and enhance social protection of employees in their working environments (ILO, 2020b).

The ILO recognises, in its mandate, four categories of rights and fundamental principles at work (De Stefano, 2016:9–11). These four categories are as follows: freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of discrimination in relation to employment and occupation, and the eradication of all forms of compulsory or forced labour (De Stefano, 2016:9–11).

Although South Africa forms part of the ILO and is one of the organisation's founding members, the country is doing little in terms of the fight against workplace violence and bullying (Smit, 2014:229–230). The ILO (2020a), however, recognises that the extreme levels of workplace violence and bullying seem to be the result of the socio-economic situation of the country, which includes poverty, high levels of crime and high levels of corruption.

During an event co-hosted by the ILO with the European Commission and the International Bar Association (IBA) in Brussels in 2019 on “Bullying and sexual harassment in the legal sector”, the

IBA presented the results of its survey on this topic (ILO, 2020b). The survey was conducted among nearly 7 000 legal professionals across 135 countries. According to the results of the report, it was evident that there is chronic underreporting of bullying and sexual harassment incidences across the world (ILO, 2020b). The results showed that 57% of bullying cases and 75% of sexual harassment cases are not being reported (ILO, 2020b). The main reasons provided for this tendency include “the profile of the perpetrator” and “the victim’s fear of repercussions” (ILO, 2020b:n.p.). During this event, the director of the ILO-Brussels, Ms Lieve Verboven, presented the newly adopted ILO standards on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, namely ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206. This is the first-ever standards on this matter and recognise a new right (ILO, 2020b). It was agreed upon by the European Commission and the ILO Commission that workplace bullying and sexual harassment are currently plaguing different organisations across the world (ILO, 2020b). Furthermore, the Convention also pushed for a cultural shift through the introduction of a new paradigm focused on respect and dignity in the world of work (ILO, 2020b).

The following sections of the Convention are applicable to the study at hand: Article 1 of Convention 190 defines “violence and harassment” in the world of work as follows:

... a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment (ILO, 2020c:n.p.).

Article 2 of the Convention protects all workers no matter their contractual status, including trainees, interns and job applicants or job-seekers. The Convention also recognises that harassment and violence might involve third parties, such as customers and clients (ILO, 2020b).

Due to the broad-based nature of work and what is considered to be employment in many different countries, the ILO provides an encompassing definition that describes the world of work (ILO, 2020b). According to Article 3 of Convention 190, the world of work no longer only encompasses the workplace in its traditional sense, but shall now also include places where a worker takes a rest or meal break, where a worker is paid, where an employee uses stationary, events or social activities, during travel and work-related trips, during training, when commuting to and from work, and during work-related communications (ILO, 2020c).

Article 5 of Convention 190 focuses on preventing and eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work and states the following:

Each member shall respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work, namely freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, as well as promote decent work (ILO, 2020c:n.p.).

According to Ms Verboden, protection and prevention, remedies and enforcement, training and guidance are the main driving forces towards addressing harassment and violence in the world of work (ILO, 2020b). Article 8 of Convention 190 reads as follows:

Each member shall take appropriate measures to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work, including:

- (a) recognizing the important role of public authorities in the case of informal economy workers;
- (b) identifying, in consultation with the employers' and workers' organizations concerned and through other means, the sectors or occupations and work arrangements in which workers and other persons concerned are more exposed to violence and harassment; and
- (c) taking measures to effectively protect such 'persons' (ILO, 2020c:n.p.).

In accordance with the above-mentioned articles, South Africa, as a member of the ILO, is expected to follow the rules that have been set out by the Convention (ILO, 2020c). In the section to follow, a discussion is provided of the Constitution of South Africa and how it influences employees and employers in the world of work.

### **3.2.2      *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)***

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was certified by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996, signed by President Nelson Mandela on the 18<sup>th</sup> of that month, and came into effect on 4 February 1997 (Department of Justice, 1996:3). The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled. Any law and/or

conduct that is in direct violation with the Constitution is invalid (Department of Justice, 1996:3). This means that all private and public sectors, including Parliament, are subordinate to the Constitution of the country.

The preamble of the Constitution (Department of Justice, 1996:1) states as follows:

We, the people of South Africa,  
recognise the injustices of our past;  
honour those who have suffered for justice and freedom in our land;  
respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and  
believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa aims to (Department of Justice, 1996:1):

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights ;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

An important part of the Constitution is the Bill of Rights, which applies to every South African citizen in the country. Chapter 2 of the Constitution, Sections 7 to 39, outlines the rights of the people of South Africa (Department of Justice, 2020:9). The Bill of Rights is not explained in its entirety here, but only the sections that relate to the study at hand. Among others, the following rights of people in South Africa are protected (Department of Justice, 2020:9):

- Section 9 seeks to ensure that all people in South Africa are equal before the law and have equal benefit and protection from the law. This section of the Constitution also affords people in South Africa protection against discrimination on any of the following grounds: race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
- Section 10 provides everyone the right to inherent dignity, and a further right to have their dignity respected and protected.
- Section 11 affords every person in South Africa the right to live.

- Section 12 affords all people in South Africa freedom and security of the person, including “to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources; not to be tortured in any way; and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” (Department of Justice, 2020:6).
- Section 14 protects all people in South Africa’s right to privacy, including the privacy of their communications.
- Section 16 allows everyone in South Africa freedom of expression as long as it is not to incite violence or to promote hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion.
- Section 23(1) affords people the right to fair labour practices.

Constitutional rights can test the validity of labour laws that seek to give effect to certain constitutional rights. Furthermore, constitutional rights may affect the development of common law if the limitations stipulated in Section 36(1) of the Constitution are adhered to (Smit, 2014:264–268). Unfortunately, there is an absence of specific legislation and inadequate protection afforded by the common law of South Africa in terms of workplace bullying. There is, however, broad-based legislation and sections of the Constitution that afford a certain level of protection from workplace bullying. One of the sections that speaks specifically to discrimination is section 9 of the Constitution. Section 9(3) of the Constitution focuses primarily on any form of discrimination (direct or indirect) being against the law (Smit, 2014:264–268). Smit (2014:264–268) states that if an individual is being bullied, it is the responsibility of the person to prove this bullying as discrimination in line with section 9(3) of the Constitution. It is important to know that the list stated in section 9(3) is an open list; therefore, if a person can prove that he/she is being bullied beyond the stated list, he/she can be afforded protection by the law (Smit, 2014:264–268). South Africa is also one of the only countries that incorporated section 23(1) of the Constitution as a fundamental right.

In the search of a uniform approach to bullying in South Africa, the Constitution and subsequent legislation, such as the Labour Relations Act (LRA), the Employment Equity Act (EEA) and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), among others, need to be considered (Smit, 2014:264–268). Therefore, the LRA of South Africa is discussed next.

### **3.2.3      *The Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995)***

The LRA (66 of 1995) (RSA, 1995:1) forms the basis of labour law in South Africa. The LRA was created in 1995 and came into effect on 11 November 1996 (RSA, 1995:1). The purpose of the LRA is to ensure fair labour practices for all employees and employers, as written in section 23(1) of the Constitution (RSA, 1995:1). In addition, the LRA aims to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace (RSA, 1995:1).

Sections 187 and 188 of Chapter 8 protect employees of South Africa against unfair dismissal (RSA, 1995:145–147). Chapter 8, section 187(f) indicates that a dismissal is unfair if the employer unfairly discriminated against an employee on any arbitrary ground, including race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, marital status or family responsibility (RSA, 1995:145–147). Chapter 8, section 188(a, b) holds that a dismissal is automatically unfair if the employer fails to prove a fair reason for the dismissal and that the dismissal was effected in accordance with a fair procedure (RSA, 1995:145–147). Therefore, if an employee is dismissed on the basis of section 187(f) and the dismissal is deemed automatically unfair, the employee is compensated for up to 24 months (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:286–290; RSA, 1995:145–147).

According to Workman-Davies (2019), there is no specific mention of workplace bullying in the labour law of South Africa, and also not in the LRA. However, that does not mean that the LRA does not protect against the act of workplace bullying. If the person who is being bullied can prove that the act itself is an unfair labour practice in accordance with section 23(1) of the Constitution (RSA, 1995) and section 187 of the LRA, the Act takes effect and the employee can be protected (Smit, 2014:274). Every employee, no matter their position or years served, has the right to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace (The South African Labour Guide, 2020a). In terms of The South African Labour Guide (2020a), the focus of the LRA and the Commission of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) is to ensure that employees need not tolerate harassment by employers and employees alike. The CCMA was established in terms of the LRA as an independent juristic person and has the purpose of resolving any dispute referred to it through conciliation, mediation and arbitration (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:238). The CCMA aims to promote fair labour practices by resolving labour disputes between employees and employers (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:238). According to The South African Labour Guide (2020a), the CCMA regards the following as examples of harassment in the working environment:

- Bullying
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Ridiculing or degrading others, picking on them or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment, for example based on race, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, disability, religion, HIV status, etc.
- Overbearing supervision or other misuses of power or position
- Making threats/comments about job security without foundation.

### **3.2.4      *The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (75 of 1997)***

The BCEA (75 of 1997) (RSA, 1997:1) also plays an important role in the discussion of unfair labour practices. The BCEA was adopted by parliament on 26 December 1997 and came into operation on 1 December 1998 (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:49; RSA, 1997:1).

The BCEA (RSA, 1997:1) gives effect to and regulates the right to fair labour practices, as conferred in section 23(1) of the Constitution (Department of Justice, 1996:9). The BCEA applies to all workers and employers in South Africa (The Department of Agriculture, 2020:1; RSA, 1997:1). The BCEA (RSA, 1997:1) gives effect to section 23(1) of the Constitution through the establishment and enforcement of the basic conditions of employment. The Act regulates working hours, leave (annual, sick, maternity, etc.), employment records, employment contracts, deductions, overtime, pay slips and termination, among other employment conditions.

According to Du Plessis and Fouché (2012:49), the BCEA sets out the minimum standards for the protection of employees in the absence of other protective measures, such as sectoral determination or collective agreements. The BCEA was established to ensure that both employees and employers commit themselves legally to the provisions of the Act to ensure protection of employees from employers ignoring the basic conditions of employment (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:50). The BCEA also aims to advance social justice and economic development, ensuring that the working conditions of workers who are unorganised and vulnerable meet the minimum standards that are socially acceptable (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:50). Sections 78(c, d) and 79(3) of Chapter 10 focus on the protection of the right of employees and protection against discrimination. Furthermore, section 79(2) of Chapter 10 states that “no person may discriminate against an employee in terms of requiring an employee not to exercise their rights, preventing an

employee from exercising their rights or prejudice an employee based on past, present or anticipated behaviour” (RSA, 1997:61–62). Chapter 10, section 78(c, d) indicates that every employee has the right to refuse to comply with an instruction that is contrary to this Act or any sectoral determination, as well as the right to refuse to agree to any term or condition of employment that is contrary to this Act or any sectoral determination (RSA, 1997:60). Chapter 10, section 79(3) states that no person may favour an employee in exchange for the employee not exercising a right conferred by this section of the Act (RSA, 1997:61).

### **3.2.5      *The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998)***

The EEA (RSA, 1998:1) ensures the equal and fair treatment of employees and employers in South Africa. The Act aims to eradicate discrimination from employment and seeks to promote affirmative action in South African businesses (RSA, 1998:1). The EEA took effect on 1 December 1998, with special attention given to Chapter 2 of the Act, which took effect on 9 August 1999 (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:89).

The purpose of the EEA is to achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment by eliminating unfair discrimination (RSA, 1998:1). Chapter 2, section 6(1, 3) of the EEA seeks to prohibit unfair discrimination in the working environment (RSA, 1998:7). Chapter 2, section 6(1) states that no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth (RSA, 1998:7). Chapter 2, section 6(3) states that harassment of an employee is unfair discrimination based on the grounds, or combination of grounds, listed in subsection 1 of section 6 (RSA, 1998:7–8).

Smit (2014:283–284) states that bullying behaviour can be brought under these above-mentioned sections, but only if there is proof of the behaviour being of a discriminatory nature. Smit (2014:284) does however state that there are many forms of bullying that cannot be regarded as discrimination. Such forms of bullying include withholding information due to trivial differences, demeaning the entire workforce or making snide remarks (Smit, 2014:284). Although there is a fine line between what constitutes bullying and what constitutes harassment and discrimination,

Smit (2014:284) states that the type of bullying behaviour will then dictate possible avenues to be explored.

According to The South African Labour Guide (2020c), in general, bullying in the working environment is seen as harassment, and as such it is also seen as unfair discrimination. However, The South African Labour Guide (2020c) notes the same problem as Smit (2014:229–230), which is that there is no clear mention of or law against workplace bullying in South Africa.

### **3.2.6      *The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (130 of 1993)***

The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) (RSA, 1993a:1) seeks to provide for disablement caused by occupational injury or disease sustained by employees in the course of their employment. COIDA was established on 24 September 1993, when it was written into legislation and signed by the president of South Africa at the time, and came into effect on 1 March 1994 (RSA, 1993a:1; The South African Labour Guide, 2020b).

The purpose of COIDA is to ensure the compensation of employees and their dependants who have suffered illness, injury or death through the act of performing their job (Grogan, 2010:8; RSA, 1993a:1). Sections 65 and 66 of Chapter 7 deal with the compensation of employees who have incurred occupational injuries while on duty (RSA, 1993a:32). Chapter 7, section 65(1) states that an employee will be compensated for occupational injury if the employee contracted an occupational disease or the employee has contracted a disease other than occupational disease and such disease has arisen out of and in course of his/her employment (RSA, 1993a:37). Chapter 7, section 66 holds that if an employee has contracted an occupational disease, it will then be presumed that such a disease has arisen out of and in the course of his/her employment (RSA, 1993a:37).

The Act states that the employer must deposit a certain amount of money into a specific fund each year. The amount to be paid by the employer depends on how dangerous the industry of the employee is, the number of workers employed and how much the employees are earning per month (The South African Labour Guide, 2020b). COIDA ensures that employees or those who are dependent on them who have suffered from injury, illness or death due to the job they were completing are compensated (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:164; Grogan, 2010:8). However, it is

important to note that these employees are compensated from a specific fund to which employees have contributed and which is also administered by the director general (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:164; Grogan, 2010:8). Furthermore, Grogan (2010:9) states that claimants can only be compensated once the death or injury has occurred and only if it happened in the scope of the employee's employment and was not predictable in the everyday working environment. The employee must be able to prove that the disease was contracted in terms of COIDA's specifications. Smit (2014:295) states that compensation granted to individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder due to workplace bullying may not come in time to relieve the pain and angst they have gone through (Smit, 2014:295). However, there is hope for the employee being bullied at work in terms of the provisions of COIDA.

### **3.2.7      *The Unemployment Insurance Act (63 of 2001)***

The Unemployment Insurance Act (UIA) (RSA, 2001:1) was created to provide payment of benefits to employees who have lost their jobs in such a manner where it was not their fault or who have fallen pregnant and no longer have a job (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:128; RSA, 2001:1). The Act includes the Unemployment Insurance Contribution Act of 1966 and was written into legislation in 2001 and took effect on 1 April 2002 (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:127).

The purpose of the Act is to establish an Unemployment Insurance Fund to which employers and employees contribute. Furthermore, the Act seeks to support unemployed employees and their beneficiaries in terms of the benefits to which they are entitled in order to alleviate the harmful economic and social effects of unemployment (RSA, 2001:2). Chapter 3, sections 12 and 20 speaks to the right to benefits in the case of illness of an employee (RSA, 2001:17, 22–23). Chapter 3, section 20(1) holds that a contributor is entitled to the illness benefits contemplated in this part for any period of illness if the contributor is unable to perform work on account of the illness (RSA, 2001:22–23). Chapter 3, section 12 indicates that a contributor or dependant is entitled to illness benefits contemplated in Chapter 3, section 20 (RSA, 2001:17).

While Chapter 3 of the UIA includes illness benefits, the Act does not stipulate whether the reference to illness is that of physical or mental illness (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:129). Therefore, if it can be proven that the illness is that of mental state due to loss of employment, it is possible to claim illness benefits (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:129).

### **3.2.8      *The Occupational Health and Safety Act (85 of 1993)***

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) (RSA, 1993b:2) ensures safe and healthful working conditions for all employees (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:185). The OHSA was signed by the president on 23 June 1993 and came into effect on 1 January 1994 (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:185; RSA, 1993b:2). The OHSA is applicable to both the private and the public sectors (Smit, 2014:291).

According to the OHSA, the purpose of the Act is to protect employees and to ensure a safe working environment free of hazards and the possibility of injury (Du Plessis & Fouché, 2012:185; RSA, 1993b:2). Section 8(1) of the OHSA states that every employer needs to provide (as far as reasonably practicable) a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health and safety of employees (RSA, 1993b:13). Section 14(a) of the OHSA indicates that it is the duty of employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, alongside the health and safety of other people who may be affected by the employees' act of omission (RSA, 1993b:19). Section 14(d) also states that every employee at work, in the case of any situation that is unsafe or unhealthy, must report said situation to their employer (RSA, 1993b:19). The onus lies on the employee to inform the employer of any unsafe or unhealthy acts, such as workplace bullying (Smit, 2014:291–292). Therefore, the OHSA imposes duties on both employees and employers that fall under the scope of the Act (Smit, 2014:291–292).

In a study conducted by Le Roux *et al.* (2010:12–13) on harassment in the workplace, it was noted that from a bullying perspective, it is not clear whether or not the general duties bestowed upon employers extend to the psychological well-being of employees as well. Therefore, it is not clear that the psychological well-being of employees should also be the responsibility of the employer. In accordance with the OHSA, the first section of the Act infers the definitions for occupational health and safety, alongside the general structure of the Act. These definitions of occupational health and safety seem to include psychological well-being (RSA, 1993b). However, although the employer and employee have a duty to maintain the health and safety of all those working in the company, the question of whether or not bullying can be interpreted as an act that falls under the OHSA is yet to be answered (Smit, 2014:292).

### **3.2.9      *The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (4 of 2000)***

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) (RSA, 2000:1) stipulates the main goal of promoting equality among employees and employers. The PEPUDA was signed on 2 February 2000 and came into effect on 1 September 2000. The main purpose of the PEPUDA is to prohibit unfair discrimination, hate speech and all matters connected with such acts (Smit, 2014:281).

The purpose of the PEPUDA is to give effect to section 9, read with item 23(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Smit, 2014:281; RSA, 1995; 2000:1). The Act seeks to prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination and harassment, promote equality, eliminate unfair discrimination, and prevent and prohibit hate speech (Smit, 2014:281; RSA, 2000:1). Chapter 2, section 6 of the Act states that neither the state nor any other person may unfairly discriminate against any person (RSA, 2000:7–8). Chapter 2, section 11 holds that no person may subject any person to any form of harassment (RSA, 2000:9). It is then conferred by the Act that any notion or act of discrimination and/or harassment must be seen as contradictory to the stipulations set out to protect employees.

The definitions given in the PEPUDA framework are very clear and can be related to bullying (Smit, 2014:282). These definitions are as follows:

‘[D]iscrimination’ means any act or omission, including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly (a) imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantage on; or (b) withholds benefits, opportunities or advantages from any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds. [...] ‘harassment’ means unwanted conduct which is persistent or serious and demeans, humiliates or creates a hostile or intimidating environment or is calculated to induce submission by actual or threatened adverse consequences and which is related to (a) sex, gender or sexual orientation; or (b) a person’s membership or presumed membership of a group identified by one or more of the prohibited grounds or a characteristic associated with such group (RSA, 2000:4).

The PEPUDA specifically states that the Act endeavours to “facilitate the transition to a democratic society, united in its diversity, marked by human relations that are caring and

compassionate and guided by the principles of equality, fairness, social progress, human dignity and freedom” (RSA, 2000:1), which, according to Smit (2014:282–283), is exactly what is lacking in an employment environment where bullying is not dealt with head on. Furthermore, Smit (2014:320) states that the PEPUDA might not be the best Act to address workplace bullying if the employee is not an employee of the state (due to the exclusion of those who fall under the EEA).

### **3.2.10     *Draft Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work***

On 20 August 2020, the Minister of Employment and Labour, Thembelani Waltermade Nxesi, published a Draft Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (henceforth referred to as the ‘Draft Code of Good Practice’) (Ramjettan, 2020). The Draft Code of Good Practice applies to public and private sectors, as well as the formal and informal economy (Ramjettan, 2020). It applies broadly to any person who is engaged in work, regardless of contractual status (and also includes employees and employers), as well as incidents in the workplace and those that occur during the course of work (examples include training, employer-provided accommodation, social events, work-related travel, etc.) (Ramjettan, 2020).

The Draft Code of Good Practice states that violence and harassment are regarded as forms of unfair discrimination (violence and harassment are to be understood as physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse) (Ramjettan, 2020). It recognises the following three broad categories of violence (Ramjettan, 2020):

- Self-directed violence
- Interpersonal violence
- Collective violence.

The main forms of violence and harassment listed in the Draft Code of Good Practice are (Ramjettan, 2020) as follows:

- Sexual violence and harassment
- Racial, ethnic and social origin violence and harassment
- **Workplace bullying**
- Violence and harassment on account of a protected disclosure.

The Draft Code of Good Practice defines bullying as follows (RSA, 2020:9):

... unwanted conduct in the workplace, which is persistent or a single incident which is serious and insults, demeans, humiliates, lowers self-esteem or self-confidence or creates a hostile or intimidating environment or is calculated to induce by submission or by actual or threatened adverse consequences, which includes the abuse of coercive power by either an individual or a group of individuals in the internal or external workplace or by an external client.

The Draft Code of Good Practice includes definitions on mobbing, cyberbullying, violence and harassment. Cyberbullying is defined as the act of bullying whereby perpetrators inappropriately use technology, inside or outside the working environment, to target their victims (RSA, 2020:9). 'Mobbing' is a term synonymous to bullying, and the act of mobbing is a form of harassment inflicted by a person or group of people targeted at an individual or group of individuals (RSA, 2020:10). Violence and harassment are defined as acts of unacceptable behaviour that may result in psychological, sexual or economic harm and include gender-based violence and harassment (ILO, 2019:5; RSA, 2020:10).

Based on these definitions, the Draft Code of Good Practice is guided by the following principles (ILO, 2019:7; RSA, 2020:17–18):

- Workplaces should be free of violence and harassment.
- Employers are responsible for providing information, training and a working environment that is safe and without risk.
- All parties of work and related thereto are responsible for establishing a workplace culture that ensures that the complaints of the victims are not trivialised or ignored.
- All parties of work and related thereto are required to proactively refrain from committing acts of violence and harassment.
- All parties of work and related thereto are required to contribute towards creating and maintaining a working environment in which violence and harassment are regarded as unacceptable.
- All parties of work and related thereto should take appropriate action against workplace bullying.

Section 6(4) of the Draft Code of Good Practice considers bullying as a violation of the right to human dignity. Furthermore, the Draft Code of Good Practice is guided by section 6(3) of the EEA, which focuses on the general prohibition of unfair discrimination and actions as specified by section 9(3) of the Constitution and section 186(2) of the LRA, which deals with unfair labour practices (ILO, 2020:18; RSA, 2020).

Section 7 of the Draft Code of Good Practice outlines the various forms of workplace violence and harassment. According to section 7(3.7), bullying in the working environment can be harassing, offending, professionally or socially excluding someone, physical bullying, tangible/material bullying (using formal power or material leverage as forms of harassment), verbal bullying and passive-aggressive or covert bullying (negative gossip or jokes at someone else's expense) (RSA, 2020:29).

Section 7(3.9) discusses in line with section 7(3.7) factors that need to be considered in the discussion on violence and harassment in the workplace. These factors are outlined as follows (RSA, 2020:29–30):

- Workplace bullying can be a continuous process throughout employment that can lead to the complainant being put in an inferior position and as a result becomes the target of systematic negative social acts.
- It is the right of an employee to disclose information on irregular or criminal conduct in the workplace without the fear of repercussions or reprisals from the employer.
- No employee may be subjected to any occupational detriment.
- Whistle-blowers may not be subjected to any occupational detriment.
- Subjecting any employee or whistle-blower to any occupational detriment is seen as unfair labour practice and is outlined in sections 186(2) (d) and 187(1) (b) of the LRA.

The goal of the Draft Code of Good Practice is to set a framework for the interpretation and implementation of the EEA in regard to the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace (Ramjettan, 2020; RSA, 2020:6). Furthermore, it seeks to provide employees, employers and other parties with guidelines on the understanding and handling of violence and harassment in the workplace (Ramjettan, 2020; RSA, 2020:6). Finally, it aims to act as a guide to human resource policies and practices that are related to violence and harassment in the workplace (Ramjettan, 2020; RSA, 2020:6).

From the above section it is evident that there are efforts being made to understand and combat workplace bullying and violence in the South African context. The next section discusses measures and interventions to combat bullying in the working environment and the organisational structure.

### **3.3 INTERVENTIONS IN WORKPLACE BULLYING**

As already indicated, workplace bullying is a form of systematic mistreatment that often includes negative psychological and/or physical behaviour over a certain period (Salin *et al.*, 2018:2). According to Giorgi *et al.* (2016:3), workplace bullying can be considered as a very stressful phenomenon in the working environment and has detrimental effects on an individual's physical and psychological health. Nielsen and Einarsen (2018:79) indicate that there is a lack of robust studies with the focus on the prevention of and interventions in workplace bullying. According to Nielsen and Einarsen (2018:79), very little is known on how to handle and prevent workplace bullying, how to rehabilitate the victims thereof and how to change working environments plagued thereby. Catley *et al.* (2013:600–601) state that research on workplace bullying often focuses on the organisational antecedents of bullying, indicating how the working environment and the organisation of work can contribute to workplace bullying. According to Catley *et al.* (2013:600), it is possible for the employer to play a pre-emptive role in the prevention of and intervention in workplace bullying.

This section elaborates on the different measures that can be followed to prevent workplace bullying and to manage instances of workplace bullying that have already manifested, as identified in the literature review. The measures are divided into primary, secondary and tertiary interventions (see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Primary, secondary and tertiary interventions in workplace bullying**

| Interventions in workplace bullying                |                                                            |                                                      |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Primary interventions                              | Secondary interventions                                    |                                                      | Tertiary interventions              |
|                                                    | Informal                                                   | Formal                                               |                                     |
| Establishing an anti-bullying culture              | Informal investigation into the alleged bullying behaviour | Written warnings                                     | Counselling and debriefing          |
| Redesigning the working environment                | Social support                                             | Withdrawal of supervisory responsibilities/demotions | Integrated counselling programme    |
| Conflict management and resolution systems         | Social training                                            | Dismissal                                            | Inpatient treatment                 |
| Changes in leadership and leadership behaviour     | Mediation                                                  | Formal incident reports and investigation            | Physiotherapy and physical exercise |
| Anti-bullying policies                             | Coaching                                                   |                                                      |                                     |
| Raising awareness of bullying and its consequences | Separating the bully and the target                        |                                                      |                                     |
| Staff selection system                             |                                                            |                                                      |                                     |
| Surveillance                                       |                                                            |                                                      |                                     |

### **3.3.1 Primary interventions**

Prevention measures are referred to as primary interventions in the literature. Primary interventions are measures used to reduce the risk of bullying (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). Researchers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have only recently started to investigate preventative measures

in relation to workplace bullying (Catley *et al.*, 2013:598). Primary interventions are proactive in nature and aim at preventing the harmful nature of workplace bullying by reducing the risks associated therewith (Vartia & Leka, 2011:360–361). Preventative measures often overlap and support one another (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). In a recent study by Einarsen, Mykletun *et al.* (2017:47–49), the authors found that anti-bullying measures highly correlate with one another. Furthermore, organisations tend to adopt a number of anti-bullying practices, rather than focusing on individual measures to combat workplace bullying (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). Primary interventions include the following: establishing an anti-bullying culture, redesigning the working environment (Salin *et al.*, 2018:3–5), conflict management and resolution systems (Herscovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14; Salin *et al.*, 2018:3–5), changes in leadership and leadership behaviour (Herscovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14), anti-bullying policies (Salin *et al.*, 2018:3–5), raising awareness of bullying and its consequences (Salin *et al.*, 2018:3–5), staff selection systems (Winn & Govern, 2018:2) and surveillance (Johnson, 2015:2389).

#### 3.3.1.1 Establishing an anti-bullying culture

A widely recommended prevention measure for workplace bullying is to establish a culture in the working environment where the act itself is deemed as unacceptable (Yamada, 2008:6–8). Such a culture would include an organisational commitment to changing the workplace culture, effective policies on workplace bullying and being aware of and understanding people's behaviour in the working environment (Yamada, 2008:6–8).

To combat workplace bullying effectively, organisations need to supply their employees, managers and supervisors with the necessary resources to deal with the phenomenon. These resources include training managers on procedures to follow when bullying occurs, showing a clear zero-tolerance stance against bullying behaviour in the workplace and launching awareness campaigns that inform the workforce on what constitutes bullying behaviour and how to identify and report instances of workplace bullying (RSA, 2020:35; Salin *et al.*, 2019:7; Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:38). Once organisations have supplied the necessary resources required to establish an anti-bullying culture, anti-bullying policies can be refined and effective organisational training and development can be implemented (Salin *et al.*, 2019:7).

Valentine *et al.* (2015:146) highlight the importance of a written code of ethics to facilitate an ethical climate and to, consequently, assist in establishing an anti-bullying culture in the

workplace. Weaver (1993) refers to a written code of ethics as formal control initiated by management outlining the standards and expected behaviour, both problematic and preferred. Carden and Boyd (2010:150) refer to a code of ethics as “the general value systems, principles, and practices of an organization”. Valentine *et al.* (2015:158) indicate that written codes only “serve as window dressing” until the code is communicated effectively to all employees. As such, a written code of ethics adds to the prevention of behaviours associated with bullying, brings awareness of the phenomenon, legitimises and encourages discourse on bullying and what it entails, and enforces accountability on perpetrators (Carden & Boyd, 2010:150). Carden and Boyd (2010:150) argue that the written code needs to distinguish between various forms of bullying, for example verbal bullying, which includes ridiculing, slandering or persistent name calling; and physical bullying, which includes kicking, pushing, tripping or shoving.

In order to reinforce the written code of ethics and subsequent preferred behaviour, employees and employers need to receive ongoing and tailored formal training specific to their roles (Carden & Boyd, 2010:151). Warren *et al.* (2014:97) refer to formal training as programmes offering a platform for discourse regarding the accepted procedures and standards, and other ethical aspects in the organisation. Caponecchia and Wyatt (2009:441) suggest that formal administrative training also be conducted for higher levels in the organisation, for example using grievance procedures properly, as well as how to handle issues of confidentiality in terms of victim and perpetrator identity.

The Draft Code of Good Practice published by the South African government (see section 3.2.10) outlines manners in which to establish an anti-bullying culture (RSA, 2020:35). Section 8(2) of the Draft Code of Good Practice states that all employers are required to have clear rules, policies and procedures prohibiting all forms of violence and discrimination (RSA, 2020:35). Section 8(4) further states that a clear understanding of the policies and procedures adopted by the employer aids in the elimination of workplace bullying (RSA, 2020:35).

According to Kalliath *et al.* (2012:764), rewarding good work ethic opens discussions between employees and employers, victims and perpetrators and contributes to an atmosphere free of bullying. When establishing an anti-bullying culture, managers must not underestimate their importance and positions as role models to their employees (Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:50). Managers and supervisors in an organisation must be aware of the signals they communicate and the attitudes they have towards bullying behaviour, because these signals and attitudes influence the

culture of the working environment (Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:50). Therefore, if managers and supervisors adopt a zero-tolerance attitude towards workplace bullying, the perceptions of employees are influenced and an anti-bullying culture can be established (Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:50).

### 3.3.1.2 Redesigning the working environment

According to Salin *et al.* (2018:10–12), there has been a large number of empirical studies that have confirmed the association between certain organisational characteristics and higher levels of workplace bullying. Leymann's (1996:168) model suggests that organisational factors such as work design and the victims' socially exposed position are determining factors of workplace bullying. Work design is defined as the process and outcomes of how work is structured, enacted, organised and experienced in a working environment (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008:1).

Work design can be used in an organisation as a weapon to target individuals or groups of individuals (Leymann, 1996:170–172). Poor work design can lead to employees being given work tasks that do not fall under their job description or responsibilities, work tasks that are below their level of expertise, or employees being given unrealistic workloads that leads to an overworked workforce (Ciby & Raya, 2014:73; Leymann, 1996:170–172). It is often the case that anti-bullying recommendations include the redressing of said organisational factors through the redesign of the job environment (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12; Vartia & Leka, 2011:360–361).

According to Dollard *et al.*, (2017:846), the safety of employees in the working climate is closely related to the design and redesign of the working environment (Dollard *et al.*, 2017:846). Paron-Wildes and Simoneaux (2019) argue that in terms of work design, the focus should be on influencing the behaviours of employees through the design of a safe workspace. The goal of work design should be to encourage good behaviour and prevent bad behaviour such as workplace bullying (Paron-Wildes & Simoneaux, 2019). Safe work Australia (2016), an Australian government statutory agency, published a guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying. The guide aims to assist people conducting business on how to manage the risks of workplace bullying. The guide (Safe work Australia, 2016:14) suggests the following manners in which work can be designed to prevent bullying in the working environment:

- Clearly define job requirements and responsibilities.

- Seek feedback from employees regarding their roles and responsibilities in the organisation on a regular basis.
- Provide employees with the necessary information, training and resources to carry out their duties effectively and safely.
- Review and monitor workloads and staffing levels to ensure that excessive working hours are reduced and regulated.
- Provide employees with support mechanisms such as employee assistance programmes, specifically during stressful work periods.
- Ensure effective communication throughout changes in the working environment, including downsizing and restructuring.

The organisational safety climate is created by the manner in which workplaces are designed (Dollard *et al.*, 2017:846). The safety climate in organisations is largely influenced by senior management and is a reflection on how employees' psychological health is valued by senior management (Dollard *et al.*, 2017:846). In organisations where the safety climate is strong, work stressors are prevented and managed before it can lead to workplace bullying (Dollard *et al.*, 2017:853).

### 3.3.1.3 Conflict management and resolution systems

Interpersonal conflict has been identified as a possible precursor of workplace bullying and can be reduced through effective conflict management and resolution systems (Hauge *et al.*, 2007). Baillien *et al.* (2011:410-412) and Leon-Perez *et al.* (2015:252–255) found that problem solving reduces the risk of bullying in the working environment, as opposed to other conflict management styles. According to Einarsen *et al.* (2002:433) and Einarsen *et al.* (2011:25), conflict should be managed as soon as possible when dealing with bullying in the working environment. The conflict escalation model of Glasl, discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3.3, is used as a model suitable to explain how conflict may escalate into bullying (Einarsen *et al.*, 2004:20; Zapf & Gross, 2001). The model suggests strategies to effectively manage the conflict in the different phases and stages of escalation.

The key actors in conflict management are human resource managers and elected safety representatives (Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:38). These individuals play various roles in the

organisation, which include dealing with workplace bullying and developing practices focused on the prevention and management of workplace bullying (Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:38).

#### 3.3.1.4 Changes in leadership and leadership behaviour

Leadership training and changes in leadership behaviour have been highlighted as primary intervention measures to combat workplace bullying (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). The standards and the expectations set by top management have been argued to play a crucial role in intervening in bullying situations (Salin, 2013:109–110).

Leadership behaviour has been identified as a crucial antecedent of workplace bullying. Leadership in the working environment has an influence on how employees perceive their actions and the actions of other employees with whom they work. A lack of leadership as well as leadership styles leads to victims feeling that management does not provide opportunities for communication, and as a result silences the victim in the workplace (Ciby & Raya, 2014:74–77; Leymann, 1996:170–172). Effective leadership enables managers to prevent the mistreatment of employees (Woodrow & Guest, 2017:2). Effective leadership can prevent simple conflicts from turning into workplace bullying (Woodrow & Guest, 2017:6).

Poor management skills and low levels of organisational support can lead to destructive leadership and staff bullying each other (Woodrow & Guest, 2017:6). Destructive leadership is a broad overarching concept covering various kinds of misbehaviours by managers, supervisors and leaders in their functions and roles as superiors and employer representatives in the organisation (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017). Destructive leadership styles are associated with different terms, such as poor leadership, the dark side of leadership, incompetence, derailment, narcissistic leaders, petty, tyranny and unethical leadership, to name but a few (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017). Destructive leadership can lead to managers bullying employees or management allowing bullying to be tolerated in the workplace (Woodrow & Guest, 2017:6).

POS is related to the manner in which employees perceive the organisation for which they work (Akhtar *et al.*, 2017:69). The manner in which employees view their organisation can be either favourable or unfavourable, depending on the level of organisational support afforded to employees (Akhtar *et al.*, 2017:69). It is therefore the role of leadership to ensure that employees are aware that there is an organisational support system in place to protect them (Wang & Hsieh,

2013:786). If employees feel a high level of organisational support from leadership and management, they will feel comfortable turning to management for help during instances of workplace bullying (Wang & Hsieh, 2013:786). On the other hand, when organisational support is perceived to be low, employees will feel less inclined to turn to management for help.

There is therefore a need for leadership to adopt a constructive management approach to dealing with bullying in the workplace. Constructive management of conflict, through formal or informal means, can prevent the conflict from escalating (Woodrow & Guest, 2017:15). Constructive management of conflict should be implemented when the conflict has just occurred or is about to occur (Mediation Training Institute, 2021). Constructive management includes understanding the conflict from both points of view, exploring all alternatives to resolving the conflict, authentic communication with both parties to establish trust, re-engaging with employees regarding individual contributions to the conflict, and contemplating the best possible outcome to the conflict (Mediation Training Institute, 2021).

Hollis (2017b:6) maintains that organisational leadership needs to take accountability, protect vulnerable employees and police abusive conduct such as workplace bullying. Those who are in power who bully other employees in the organisation will continue to do so unless the working environment and the leadership in charge thereof are held legally accountable for bullying behaviours of perpetrators (Hollis, 2017b:6). Destructive behaviour from leadership and employees alike can be stopped with the provision of an employee handbook (Leonard, 2020). The handbook should have a section that establishes the company policies for conflict resolution and the procedures to be followed when reporting discriminatory or harassing actions (Leonard, 2020). Furthermore, through leadership and management training on constructive management of conflict in the working environment, destructive behaviours can be stopped before they become a problem (Leonard, 2020).

The Draft Code of Good Practice states in section 9(2.2.(j)) that it is the duty of employers (management/leadership) to eliminate violence and harassment in the workplace through measures such as monitoring, consultation, awareness raising, support and training, enforcement of written policy, etc. (RSA, 2020:38). The Code also states in section 8(3) that any policy that is set up by leadership to counteract workplace bullying should make it clear that all forms of violence and harassment are forms of unfair discrimination. In turn, leadership must regard unfair

discriminatory acts as very serious forms of misconduct and may consider the dismissal of the alleged perpetrator (RSA, 2020:35).

### 3.3.1.5 Anti-bullying policies

In accordance with a wide range of literature, it is recommended that specific anti-bullying policies be developed and implemented to counter workplace bullying effectively (Rayner & Lewis, 2011:330–332; Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). Organisational policy communicates the organisation's intent and summarises the process as it pertains to workplace bullying (Rayner & Lewis, 2011:330–332). Anti-bullying policies need to contain a clear statement from top management of the organisation on the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Furthermore, it should set clear definitions of what constitutes workplace bullying as well as the procedures to follow in dealing therewith (Salin, 2008:225–227).

Bullying behaviours can be redressed and eliminated through the strict enforcement of anti-bullying policies and effective training and education of employees on the content of the policies (Cooper *et al.*, 2017:5; Salin *et al.*, 2019:7). Topics of training may include the definition and clarification of dysfunctional behaviours; awareness and recognition of the problem; fair responses at individual, organisational and group level; psychological and economic consequences of bullying; and prevention and reporting procedures (Ferris, 2009:182; Fox & Stallworth, 2009:221–223).

It is necessary for management to ensure that employees are made aware of policies in place to protect them. Clear communication is essential for ensuring that all members in the working environment have a clear and shared understanding of how bullying is defined and the procedures to follow to report bullying behaviour (Smith & Coel, 2018:1). Examples of such communication include posting policies in visible locations, such as websites or meeting rooms, publishing policies in employee manuals or textbooks, launching attitude and well-being campaigns, and actively discussing the policies with employees to ensure that policies are consistently applied and enforced, such as in-service training (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017; Stuart-Cassel *et al.*, 2011:32).

### 3.3.1.6 Raising awareness of bullying and its consequences

Raising awareness of workplace bullying is of utmost importance (Salin, 2013:109–110; Vartia & Leka, 2011:360–361). Raising awareness of workplace bullying includes rooted information and attitude campaigns that assist both managers and employees in recognising bullying behaviour and the consequences thereof (Salin *et al.*, 2018:11–12).

Branch and Murray (2015:24) suggest that a comprehensive awareness programme is required to successfully raise awareness of workplace bullying. Such a programme would include training on what constitutes bullying and what does not, as well as what are more subtle and insidious forms of workplace bullying (e.g. withholding information and being ignored), and the escalating nature of bullying and how it correlates with the decline of organisational output and work ethic (Branch & Murray, 2015:24–25).

Ferris *et al.* (2021:18) argue that technological advancements in the working environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be used as a tool to ensure that awareness of workplace bullying becomes an everyday part of work life. Awareness of workplace bullying can be created via email, social media and other forms of communication such as podcasts, virtual workshops and virtual training (Ferris *et al.*, 2021:18–19).

The Draft Code of Good Practice states in section 8(5) that it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that all policies and procedures are communicated effectively to all workers. In section 9(2.1) of the Code it is stated that employees must implement awareness training to educate employees on harassment and violence, and must reinforce and maintain compliance through ongoing awareness programmes (RSA, 2020:36). Under the provisions of section 9(2.2), prevention and awareness programmes must ensure that (RSA, 2020:36–37):

- communication campaigns are conducted in the workplace;
- assessments of the current situation are conducted in consultation with workers and worker unions;
- effective occupational health and safety measures are adopted and implemented;
- effective measures are in place to reduce the risk of violence and harassment from occurring;
- prevention programmes are developed and implemented in consultation with all relevant stakeholders;

- information and access to counselling are available;
- workers are trained on preventing violence and harassment from occurring in the world of work, including anger management;
- monitoring and evaluation take place; and
- training and awareness programmes are included in a formal written policy.

According to Ferris *et al.* (2021:9), one measure to ensure that employees are aware of workplace bullying and the procedures associated therewith is to require from employees to sign that they have read and understood the code of conduct of the organisation. In this code of conduct should be included the requirements on standards of behaviour. Signing the document could ensure that employees are aware of behaviours that constitute bullying behaviour in the workplace (Ferris *et al.*, 2021:9).

### 3.3.1.7 Staff selection system

A staff selection system focuses on using psychological testing, reference checking and behavioural interviewing techniques as methods of pre-employment screening (Lutgen-Sandvik *et al.*, 2009:32–33; Matthews, 2017:27; Mitchell *et al.*, 2014:149). However, this should be used with caution, as the potential for adverse impacts and unfairness can have negative consequences (Fodchuk, 2007:29–31; Matthews, 2017:27). All selection methods used must be deemed valid and job-related (Catley *et al.*, 2013:601–602). The focus should not be on addressing bullying through the identification of either potential perpetrators or targets, but rather on assessing job-related knowledge, abilities and skills (Catley *et al.*, 2013:601–602; Fodchuk, 2007:29–31).

Halim *et al.* (2018:10) recommend including personality assessment in staff selection systems, as the pre-screening process is seen as essential to ensure that job applicants not only meet the job requirements, but also understand the behavioural expectations that have been set by the organisation. As a preventative measure, employment screening provides a more complete assessment of the positive attributes and the potential disqualifying behaviours that an employee might have, such as a tendency for bullying (Winn & Govern, 2018:2). Due diligence in terms of pre-screening requires sufficient background data (regarding character, conduct, etc.) to ensure the security and safety of employees and the organisation (Winn & Govern, 2018:2–3). During the processes of pre-screening, applicants' weaknesses are evaluated to see whether these

outweigh their strengths (Winn & Govern, 2018:2–3). Although this method of prevention is successful, there is no specific category by which authorities or the employer may disprove or approve a candidate for the position; therefore, a single transgression in the past may bring to light a pattern of unreliability (Winn & Govern, 2018:2–3).

#### 3.3.1.8 Surveillance

Henson (2010:558) refers to surveillance as the routine and purposive observation of an individual. Foucault (1982:790) argues that continuous observation leads to staff internalising their given subjectivity and self-regulating their own behaviour as ethical in addition to being shaped according to the rules of the organisation. Johnson (2015:2389) highlights how the prevention of workplace bullying could be increased if managers personally observe and monitor the behaviour of staff.

### 3.3.2 ***Secondary interventions***

Secondary intervention measures often become necessary when primary intervention measures have failed and bullying behaviour has already occurred as a result (Salin *et al.*, 2018:12). Secondary interventions can be categorised into two different categories, namely informal and formal interventions (Salin *et al.*, 2018:12–13). Informal intervention approaches are initial attempts to address inappropriate behaviour by talking to the perpetrator or through reconciliation within the unit in which he/she works (Salin *et al.*, 2018:12–13). Formal intervention approaches include formal investigation procedures that are conducted by the human resource department of an organisation (Salin *et al.*, 2018:12–13).

#### 3.3.2.1 Informal interventions

When formal intervention measures are unavailable, employees draw from personal qualities and informal support networks that are available in and outside the organisation (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2018:144). These internal and external processes and procedures are important in addressing the situation and helping employees feel a sense of agency, retain autonomy and become stronger (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2018:144).

Informal intervention measures are implicit messages on how to behave in situations where unethical and bullying behaviour could possibly occur (Tenbrunsel *et al.*, 2003:286–287). These

measures largely comprise informal signals relating to the organisation's traditions, values and beliefs (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:39–40; Tenbrunsel *et al.*, 2003:286–287). These informal signals are transferred through socialisation, conversation, observation and other forms of social learning (Smith-Crowe *et al.*, 2015:793–795). By forming part of an organisation, members gain knowledge and experience regarding what constitutes acceptable behaviour in the working environment (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:39–40). It is through myths, norms, stories and rituals that organisational members have the ability to decide on which action to take when confronted with unethical behaviour and ethical issues in the working environment (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:39–40).

The most-mentioned informal secondary intervention measures, according to literature consulted, are informal investigation into the alleged bullying behaviour (D'Cruz *et al.*, 2019:78, 89–90; Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:44), social support (Branch & Murray, 2015:16), social training (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.* 2017:39–40), mediation, coaching and the separation of the parties involved (Salin *et al.*, 2018:5).

**Informal investigation into the alleged bullying behaviour.** Rayner and Lewis (2011:328) refer to informal investigation as the “initial attempts to address inappropriate behaviour by talking to the perpetrator or seeking reconciliation within the unit”. Hoel and Einarsen (2020:342) argue that organisations, especially ones with growing diversity, should be equipped to organise and launch investigations into allegations of workplace bullying. In this regard, Woodrow and Guest (2017:226) suggest that a manager organise an informal discussion between the bully, the victim and the manager in order to gain a bigger picture of the incident. Woodrow and Guest (2017:224) further suggest that managers handle complaints informally through conversing with both parties before the incident escalates to bullying. Informal discussions between victims and their bullies are a common mediation and intervention method used in workplace bullying and can help resolve bullying cases in lower levels of the organisation (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:44). These informal discussions should be organised and directed by line managers, human resource managers or union representatives. MacCurtain *et al.* (2018:5) found that employees were more willing to engage in informal discussions in reaction to being or observing bullying, such as informally discussing an incident with a line manager.

**Social support.** Cohen *et al.* (2000:312) refer to social support as a process of exchanging psychosocial and physical resources in order to improve self-esteem, coping mechanisms,

competence and belonging. Social support applies to targets, witnesses and perpetrators (Branch & Murray, 2015:16). The social support may be received from one another as employees and managers, or from others external to the organisation (Branch & Murray, 2015:16). According to House *et al.* (1982:128), social support includes getting help or instrumental support, information support, emotional support such as empathy or sympathy, as well as feedback. Baillien *et al.* (2009:4) highlight the importance of social support in the working environment, as an increase in interpersonal conflict between staff results in an increased possibility of workplace bullying occurring. Warszewska-Makuch *et al.* (2015:134) indicate that the social support of other staff and management/supervisors can help mediate the mental health consequences of workplace bullying.

**Social training.** According to Lösel and Bender (2014:59), social training includes increasing social skills by training staff in accepted ways of behaving and thinking in terms of social issues in the working environment, such as bullying. Nel (2019:152) emphasises the importance of informal training, as it improves staff members' emotional intelligence in order to help victims bounce back and recover from previous incidents or to reduce the risk of future bullying incidents. According to Liu *et al.* (2018:464), the manager, as leadership figure in the work environment, can personally address the norms and social relations in the organisation (Liu, Wong & Roland, 2018:464). Leaders (managers) should communicate the message that bullying is unacceptable. Through dignified workplace behaviour and practising respectful communication, executives and managers can reduce bullying and other forms of mistreatment (Yamada, 2008:6–7).

**Mediation.** According to Bingham and Nabatchi (2003:9), mediation is among the most popular alternative dispute resolution measures found in the literature. It is important for an organisation to react in an appropriate manner when bullying has been reported in the working environment (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14). It is often the case that the reporting of victimisation or bullying can have negative consequences for the target. This is the case when there is poor organisational response from management, such as the denial or trivialisation of what has occurred (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14). Mediation is one of the manners in which an organisation can respond to instances of victimisation and bullying in the working environment (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14). Mediation is the process by which the perpetrator and the target are brought together to work through the situation in a facilitated discussion (Cheng, 2015:310; Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14; McKenzie, 2015:52). Mediation therefore allows for the opportunity for the parties involved to talk directly with each other, with the discussion being facilitated by a third-party independent mediator

(Cheng, 2015:310; Gilin Oore *et al.*, 2015:305–306; Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14; McKenzie, 2015:52). The focus of mediation is to preserve both present and future relationships (Cheng, 2015:310; Gilin Oore *et al.*, 2015:305–306; Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14; McKenzie, 2015:52). Jenkins (2011:29) states that in the earlier stages of workplace bullying, the parties involved are more willing and interested in resolving the conflict through mediation.

Unfortunately, in cases where a negative pattern of behaviour has been ingrained in the workplace culture, mediation may not be sufficient to deal with the conflict situation (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14). This may be due to a power imbalance that has developed between the alleged perpetrators and the targets (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14). When the power structure is misused and manipulated to target and victimise employees, mediation as a prevention measure may become less viable. In bullying situations, employees of lower status are often the victims and the perpetrators are often managers and supervisors who are in charge of them (Jenkins, 2011:28). In most workplaces, informal power structures exist as well. These structures are based on job security, increased knowledge, work experience or being more employable (Jenkins, 2011:28). Further examples may also include power structures based on race, age, gender, ability and sexuality (Jenkins, 2011:28).

There are instances where conflict can escalate to where one or more of the parties become more aggressive. While mediation may still be the appropriate manner to resolve the conflict, the mediator will have to be aware of power differences between the parties involved (Jenkins, 2011:29). However, it is important to note that without a statutory claim in place (such as age, race or sexual discrimination), the process of mediation may not always be voluntary, and parties involved may be required and legally bound by management to take part (Brubaker *et al.*, 2014:9; Jenkins, 2011:29–30).

**Coaching.** Coaching is considered as tactical, career development, personalised and educational support (Namie & Namie, 2009:10). In the working environment, coaching consists of four core elements: support, modelling, step-by-step development and encouragement (Bentley, 1996:121). In organisations, victims of a bullying incident may seek the advice or help of a third-party individual in or outside the organisation (Namie & Namie, 2009:10). Help for employees that is considered to fall outside of the scope of the organisation's consulting services includes individual psychotherapy or group therapy (Namie & Namie, 2009:10). It is often the case that the chosen 'coach' is a therapist/licenced mental health professional (Namie & Namie, 2009:10).

Coaching inside the organisation can also be viewed as a one-on-one learning and development intervention strategy that uses goal-focused, collaborative, reflective relationships to achieve professional outcomes (Smither, cited by Jones *et al.*, 2016:4). Primarily, coaching is viewed as an executive developmental activity limited to managers and executives in the organisation, but in reality, there is no need to limit coaching to only these positions (Jones *et al.*, 2016:4). A safe environment is created by coaching in the organisation through the confidentiality, non-judgemental perspectives (of the coach) and the privacy of the coaching sessions, and it offers the coachee a safe environment to reflect and improve on areas of weakness (Jones *et al.*, 2016:6).

**Separating the bully and the target.** In order to resolve workplace conflict, organisations could physically separate the bully and the target as an organisational intervention (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2010:33). Ciby and Raya (2014:79) emphasise that it is the responsibility of human resource professionals and team leaders/project managers to encourage employees to voice their experiences and issues and to report bullying when it occurs. The authors agree that separating the bully and the target in the working environment is a good way to reduce the victim's exposure to the alleged bullying behaviour (Ciby & Raya, 2014:79). Examples of separating the bully and the target may be to have them work in departments in separate branches, or to offer a transfer for either one to another branch, if possible.

### 3.3.2.2 Formal interventions

Formal interventions are measures involving formal investigation procedures conducted by the human resource department (Salin *et al.*, 2018:5). Formal processes may result in disciplinary action against the perpetrator and include formal sanctions such as written warnings, withdrawal of supervisory responsibilities/demotions and dismissal (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:42,48; Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:14; Salin *et al.*, 2018:5). Another formal intervention measure suggested by Branch and Murray (2015:16) is formal incident reports and investigation. Formal sanctions are the use of the "coercive powers" of the organisation to reinforce the mandatory nature of policies (Kamei *et al.*, 2015:39).

**Written warnings.** When workplace bullying is already present in the working environment, formal sanctions such as written warnings may offer a solution to resolving the situation (Einarsen, Mykletun *et al.*, 2017:48). A written warning is a document that is used by the employer to formally

inform an employee of concern about a capacity or conduct in the workplace (AFT Legal, 2021; The South African Labour Guide, 2021a). An example may be the perpetrator receiving a written warning to cease his/her current behaviour towards the targeted employee.

**Withdrawal of supervisory responsibilities/demotions.** Employees who are accused of workplace bullying can be demoted as a form of formal intervention in order to resolve the bullying situation (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:14). A demotion can be seen as a compulsory reduction in an employee's rank or job title in the organisation (Jones *et al.*, 1991). Disciplinary action in an organisation may include demotion as a course of action should an employee be found guilty of bullying (Dzurec *et al.*, 2013). An example of demotion would be stripping a supervisor of his/her rank and job title due to being found guilty of workplace bullying. Hershcovis *et al.* (2015:14) state that demotion on the basis of an unconfirmed allegation can be troublesome to the employee making the accusation and the employers enforcing formal sanctions without due investigation and process. This can be attributed to the he-said she-said nature of bullying situations.

**Dismissal.** The dismissal of an employee means the termination of the employment contract against the will of the employee or without the employee having a say in the matter (Fair Work Commission, 2021; The South African Labour Guide, 2021a; 2021b). Furthermore, a dismissal becomes necessary when an employer deems the conduct of the act of the employee as being unlawful or unethical in relation to the organisation's rules and policies (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:14). This formal sanction can be used by employers as a last resort should the unacceptable conduct be proven true (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:14).

**Formal incident reports and investigation.** Targets can be advised to keep a diary of behaviours and experiences and to list any witnesses of the incident, if possible (Branch & Murray, 2015:16). Through the use of formal incident reports, an investigation can be launched into the bullying accusations (Branch & Murray, 2015:16). These investigations should be done in a timely manner and with concern for the well-being of all those involved (Branch & Murray, 2015:16). This form of intervention allows targets to seek advice from confidential counsellors, request mediation, obtain medical and psychological intervention from therapists and doctors, approach supervisors and human resource managers, and file formal internal complaints (D'Cruz *et al.*, 2019:83).

Hoel and Einarsen (2020:347) highlight the importance of written procedures, as they ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved in the investigation process are

clearly defined and that the investigative process is fair, reasonable and adheres to the principles of the organisation's disciplinary code. Written procedures for handling complaints include the steps or methods to be used to resolve conflict between individuals and the collective in the organisation (Roche, 2016:65). By allocating roles and responsibilities clearly in the written procedures, the impact of interference by factors such as heightened emotions and organisational politics is reduced (Hoel & Einarsen, 2020:348; Salin, 2003).

In this regard, the Draft Code of Good Practice stipulates in section 8(2) that employers are required to have clear rules, policies and procedures in place to prohibit violence and harassment in the working environment (RSA, 2020:35). The draft Code further stipulates in section 8(6.3) that any victim or target of workplace violence and harassment has the right to lodge a complaint with the employer without fear of victimisation or reprisal (RSA, 2020:36).

In an organisation where formal measures have been put into place, organisational members would have the knowledge on how to act if bullying occurs in the working environment (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:39–40). They would be familiar with organisational policies and procedures and would know how to deal with bullying and unethical incidents (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:39–40). Furthermore, organisational members would have the opportunity and ability to engage in formal discussions at staff meetings in order to clarify the stance taken by the organisation in terms of bullying in the working environment (Einarsen, Skogstad *et al.*, 2017:39–40).

### **3.3.3      *Tertiary interventions***

Tertiary interventions comprise rehabilitation and counselling approaches in order to reduce and halt any potential damage that has been caused (Salin *et al.*, 2018:12; Vartia & Leka, 2011). Research suggests that no one particular approach is more effective than another (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14; Salin *et al.*, 2018:12). These approaches to intervention can often be found and accomplished outside of the organisation by external parties and include counselling and debriefing (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14; Salin *et al.*, 2018:12), an integrated counselling programme, inpatient treatment, and physiotherapy and physical exercise (Crimp, 2017:24).

### 3.3.3.1 Counselling and debriefing

Counselling and debriefing are methods of intervention that are offered to the targets or victims of workplace bullying. Victims' socially exposed position before and after the act of bullying has taken place can contribute to higher levels of workplace bullying in the organisation. The influence of victims' socially exposed position can be as far reaching as victims struggling or being unable to maintain their reputation or social contracts with their fellow employees (Leymann, 1996:170–172). Due to victims of workplace bullying often going through physical and psychological torment, the result is diminished work capacity and a drastic decrease in self-esteem (Constantinescu, 2014:500). Employees seeking counselling can include the victim of bullying seeking support from an independent contact or a person who is external to the organisation (Branch & Murray, 2016:16). This is a method by which the victim/target talks to a professional about what has occurred and, in turn, the professional guides the target through a variety of possible solutions (Herscovis *et al.*, 2015:14–15). Employee assistance programmes, alongside employee health programmes, can be used to deal with workplace bullying should it have reached a level where the provision of counselling and debriefing becomes necessary (Johnson, 2011:59–60). However, due to a diminished level of trust in the organisation by the employee (target), if actual professional psychological care is necessary, it should rather be provided outside the organisation (Johnson, 2011:59–60).

Not all methods of counselling and debriefing are done through professional intervention, but may include self-coping mechanisms (Ciby & Raya, 2014:69–70). Self-coping mechanisms may include the sharing of emotional experiences with friends and family, and voicing the issues that they are experiencing to their fellow colleagues (Ciby & Raya, 2014:69–70).

### 3.3.3.2 Integrated counselling programmes

Counselling is commonly used as a tertiary intervention method in cases of workplace bullying, recommended for both the bully and the victim (Hamish, 2017:24; Mwenze, 2018:2). Tehrani (2011:390) suggests the use of an integrated counselling approach, as this approach offers the counsellor freedom to adapt in his/her counselling methods, for example being able to choose between or combine approaches from schools such as humanism or existentialism (focusing on self-actualisation of the individual), psychodynamics (focusing on past events and their influence on the individual in the current situation) and behaviourism (an approach in psychology

emphasising observable, measurable behaviour). Hamish (2017:24) argues that such an approach aims to mitigate and mediate the effects of bullying, while tending to the victim's health.

#### 3.3.3.3 Inpatient treatment

Hamish (2017:24) depicts inpatient treatment as a tertiary intervention method for workplace bullying. According to Schwickerath and Zapf (2020:399), inpatient treatment should assist the victim with participating in the rehabilitation process. Inpatient treatment with such a focus assists victims by helping them distance themselves from the situation, understand the contributions, both organisational and personal, to the situation and finding the therapeutic and most practical methods to help the victim heal (Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020:399). Schwickerath and Zapf (2020:399) offer the example of signing a victim off sick, which would free the victim from work duties and creates the opportunity for the employee to be taken out of the bullying situation.

#### 3.3.3.4 Physiotherapy and physical exercise

Physiotherapy and physical exercise are deemed tertiary intervention methods regarding bullying in the workplace (Hamish, 2017:24; Vartia & Leka, 2011:370). Physiotherapy and physical exercise focus on helping victims reduce the consequences bullying has had on them (Vartia & Leka, 2011:370). Lin *et al.* (2020:144) argue that physical exercise improves the physical and psychological effects of bullying by releasing endorphins, dopamine and serotonin to create a sense of well-being. Examples include going on walks, running, participating in relay races or playing games that focus on movement, posture control and awareness of the body (Philippot *et al.*, 2021:5).

According to the Draft Code of Good Practice, treatment, care and support programmes must ensure that (RSA, 2020:39):

- health and safety measures are clear and that procedures to be followed are in place;
- the elimination of workplace violence and harassment is written into the occupational health and safety strategy;
- the employer and employee take responsibility for a safe working environment;
- records pertaining to any support service (counsellors, police, psychologists) are available and readily accessible;

- all information pertaining to programmes on treatment, care and support is clearly communicated; and
- when services for treatment, care and support are unavailable to the employees, workers are informed of third-party and/or external services.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined and discussed legislative response and intervention measures to combat workplace bullying. The first section outlined the statutory and legal perspectives related to workplace bullying in South Africa. The role played by the ILO, the Constitution of South Africa and applicable labour law was discussed. The ILO gives equal voice to employees and employers in determining labour standards and shaping programmes and policies across the world. The ILO ensures that the rights of employees are promoted at work and that social protection is afforded to employees from actions such as workplace bullying. Within the legislative framework of South Africa there is a lack of clarity on the role played by legal dispensation and the protection that should be afforded to victims of workplace bullying. The Constitution provides protection to all South African citizens and forms the basis of the legislative framework of the country. The labour law applicable to this study and that was discussed draws from the Constitution's mandate and what it seeks to accomplish. The applicable labour law that was discussed provides employees with the basic protection afforded to them in the workplace. Unfortunately, the applicable labour law does address workplace bullying directly. The Draft Code of Good Practice, within the South African context, seeks the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. The guidelines and principles of the Draft Code of Good Practice create a framework for the way in which workplace bullying can be dealt with in the working environment. The Draft Code of Good Practice has now been accepted, which indicates a progressive step towards the increase of awareness of workplace bullying, as well as dealing with the phenomenon in the South African context. The Draft Code of Good Practice outlines the different parameters associated with the different acts of bullying and suggests possible remedies and preventative measures to stop bullying from taking place in the workplace.

The next section focused and built on the statutory and legislative frameworks and outlined how workplace bullying can be managed in the working environment. Primary, secondary and tertiary intervention measures were discussed. Primary intervention measures are aimed at resolving interpersonal conflict before it turns into a bullying situation. Secondary intervention measures are

required when initial primary intervention measures have failed and include formal and informal intervention measures. Tertiary intervention measures include rehabilitation and counselling approaches to reduce and halt any potential damage that has been caused by bullying.

As this chapter draws to a close, it should be noted that workplace bullying as a phenomenon can be prevented and dealt with in the working environment. Through continuous communication between employers and employees, managers and their teams, employees can be protected and work in an environment free of workplace bullying. In the next chapter, the researcher presents and discusses the empirical results of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EMPIRICAL RESULTS, FINDINGS AND ANALYSES**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter introduced the study and presented the problem statement, research questions and objectives, as well as the research methodology. Chapters 2 and 3 focused on providing a theoretical foundation for the study. Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical perspectives on workplace bullying. Chapter 3 gave an overview of the South African legislative framework and the protection afforded to victims of workplace bullying. Furthermore, the chapter discussed prevention and intervention measures for workplace bullying.

This chapter presents and discusses the empirical results and findings of the study. The methodological approach taken is outlined in detail in Chapter 1 under section 1.6.1. Consequently, the next section explains the exposition of the methodology. Next, the results of the quantitative phase of the study are presented, followed by the findings of the qualitative phase of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the results and the findings of the study.

#### **4.2 EXPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology used for this study was explained and discussed in Chapter 1. This study used a mixed-method sequential explanatory research design. Quantitative and qualitative methods and procedures were used to gather and analyse the data. The processes followed to analyse and report the data are discussed below.

##### **4.2.1 *Quantitative phase***

For the quantitative phase of the study, data were collected through a web-based survey using a coded questionnaire. The questionnaire (see annexures A and B) included three sections. Section A contained biographical questions on gender, location of campus, age, marital status, highest qualification, length of employment at the university, nature of employment at the university and employment contract at the university. For Section B, the NAQ developed by Einarsen *et al.* (2009:24) and Notelaers *et al.* (2019:58) for measuring perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work was used. Permission was obtained from the Bergen Bullying Research

Group to use the survey (see annexures E and F). The scale consisted of 22 items; however, two of the items, "Being ignored or excluded" and "Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach", were divided into two questions to avoid double-barrelled questions and to enhance understanding of the individual items. This resulted in a 24-item scale measuring perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work. A five-point Likert-type scale was used consisting of the following categories: "Never" (1), "Now and then" (2), "Monthly" (3), "Weekly" (4) and "Daily" (5). For Section C, a 23-item self-constructed coded questionnaire was used measuring perceptions of policies and practices on inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution (university) under investigation. A four-point Likert-type scale was used consisting of the following categories: "Not at all" (1), "To some extent" (2), "To a moderate extent" (3) and "To a great extent" (4). A fifth option, "Don't know", was included, which was recoded to missing data so that the scale retained ordered categories. The Statistical Consultation Services at NWU assisted the researcher by creating the web-based survey (questionnaire). The survey was distributed among all academic and support staff at the institution under investigation; therefore, the complete target population was included in the sample. In total, 281 responses were received.

The data collected were processed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 27). The Statistical Consultation Services of NWU assisted the researcher in processing the data. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to validate the factor structure of the *workplace bullying* construct and the reliability of the Cronbach's alphas (Section B of the questionnaire). Three goodness-of-model-fit indices were used to determine how well the measurement model fit the data of the sample. According to Hancock and Mueller (2010), it is good practice to report multiple fit indices, preferably from three broad classes. The following indices were used: CMIN/DF, CFI and RMSEA with its 90% confidence intervals.

CMIN/DF is the chi-square fit index divided by degrees of freedom and is also called the chi-square to DF ratio (Arbuckle, 2011:623). Regarding the CMIN/DF, it is important that the ratio should be as close to 1 for correct models (Arbuckle, 2011:621). According to Arbuckle (2013:621), it is not clear how far from 1 the ratio should get before concluding that a model is unsatisfactory. Paswan (cited by Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:585) states that a CMIN/DF value of 2 or less is preferred, but a value between 2 and 5 is still considered acceptable. According to Mueller (1996), the interpretation of the size of the CMIN/DF value depends to a large extent on the viewpoint of the investigator, but in practice values as high as 3 and 4 or even 5 still represent a good model data fit.

CFI is the Comparative Fit Index (also known as the Bentler Comparative Fit Index). It is used to compare the existing model fit with a null model, which assumes that the indicator variables in the model are uncorrelated (Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:586). The values of CFI vary between 0 and 1. A CFI value close to 1 (between 0.9 and 0.95) indicates a very good model data fit (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994:662; Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:586). Hair *et al.* (2010) and Mueller (1996) suggest that values above 0.9 indicate a good overall fit.

RMSEA is the root mean square error of approximation. It is a measure of fit that does not require comparison with the null model and is less affected by sample size than other indexes (Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:587–88). An RMSEA value less than or equal to 0.05 indicates a good model data fit (Brown & Cudeck, cited by Nordlund & Garvill, 2002:251). An RMSEA value less than or equal to 0.08 indicates an adequate fit (Brown & Cudeck, cited by Nordlund & Garvill, 2002:251; Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:588). Hu and Bentler (1999:1) suggest an RMSEA value less than or equal to 0.06 as the ‘cut-off’ for a good model data fit. An RMSEA value of 0.10 is considered to be a poor fit (Dixon & Dixon, 2010:117; Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:588). Blunch (2008) recommends that models with RMSEA values of 0.10 and larger should not be accepted. RMSEA is normally reported with its confidence intervals. In a good-fitting model, the lower 90% confidence limit should be very close to 0, while the upper limit should be less than 0.08 (Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:588).

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to explore the underlying structure of policies and practices (Section C of the questionnaire). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the scale. Cronbach’s alpha is the most common measure of scale reliability (Field, 2005:667). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients normally range between 0 and 1. Therefore, the closer the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is to 1, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale (Gilem & Gilem, 2003:87). On the other hand, the closer the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is to 0, the weaker the internal consistency of the items in the scale (Gilem & Gilem, 2003:87). Ideally, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of a scale should be above 0.7 (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). Cronbach’s alpha values are quite sensitive to the number of the items in a scale, therefore a scale with fewer than 10 items might result in a low value. In this case, the mean inter-item correlation may be appropriate to report. Briggs and Cheek (cited by Pallant, 2016:101) recommend inter-item correlation values of 0.2 to 0.4 as an optimal range to be reported.

In addition, descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank-order correlations, independent sample t-tests, ANOVAs and effect sizes were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were interpreted and reported by mean and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics is information that is presented in a few words in order to describe the basic features of the data in the study (Bland, 2015 & Sundaram *et al.*, 2014, cited by Mishra *et al.*, 2019:67). There are three major types of descriptive statistics, namely measures of central tendency (the mode, mean and median), measures of dispersion or variation (standard deviation, among others) and measures of frequency (percentage and frequency) (Mishra *et al.*, 2019:67).

The arithmetic average or mean is the mathematical average value of a set of data and takes into account the available data in computing the central tendency of a frequency distribution (Leech *et al.*, 2005:20; Mishra *et al.*, 2019:68). The mean is one of the most popular and most often-used measures of central tendency (Crewson, 2006:111; Mishra *et al.*, 2019:68). The mean is calculated by adding up all of the raw scores of data that have been collected by the researcher, and then dividing that total score by the number of scores (Leech *et al.*, 2005:20). The mean is a unique value for one group, meaning that there is only one answer that is considered useful when comparing two groups (Mishra *et al.*, 2019:68).

Standard deviation is a common measure of variability that is most applicable when the researcher has normally distributed data and is a measure used to show how far spread out the value (SD) is from its mean value (M) (Leech *et al.*, 2005:20; Mishra *et al.*, 2019:68). In statistical terminology, the standard deviation is the square root of variance (Crewson, 2006:112). The standard deviation is based on the deviation of each score from the calculated mean of all the raw scores collected (Leech *et al.*, 2005:20; Mishra *et al.*, 2019:68). Therefore, the standard deviation provides a representation of the variation among the collected scores (Crewson, 2006:112).

Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to determine the relative strength and the direction of association between two ranked variables. Spearman's rank-order correlation is a statistical measure of the strength and direction of a monotonic relationship between two variables (Laerd Statistics, 2021). A monotonic relationship is a relationship that follows the following rules: As the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable will increase as well, or as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable will decrease (Laerd Statistics,

2021). Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1. The closer the Spearman's correlation coefficient is to 0, the weaker the association between the variables (Laerd Statistics, 2021). Positive values indicate that higher values of one variable can be associated with higher values of the other variable (Puth *et al.*, 2015:4–5). Subsequently, negative values indicate that higher values of one variable are associated with lower values of the other variable (Puth *et al.*, 2015:4–5).

Independent sample t-tests are used to compare the mean scores of two independent groups (e.g. male and female) on a continuous variable (e.g. workplace bullying) (Eiselen & Uys, 2016: 74; Pallant, 2016:244). Therefore, an independent sample t-test indicates to the researcher whether there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of two independent groups (Gerald, 2018:51). The requirements for an independent sample t-test are a) one categorical variable with only two groups (e.g. male and female), b) one continuous variable (e.g. workplace bullying) (Pallant, 2016:118) and c) within each group, the variances of the dependent variable should be the same (Pallant, 2016:208). A further requirement is that the dependent variable should be normally distributed; however, if the sample size is large, it is not critical for the distribution to be normal (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:89). The results of the independent sample t-tests are interpreted as follows: If the p-value (sig. 2-tailed) is less than 0.05, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups on the dependent variable. On the other hand, if the p-value (sig. 2-tailed) is above 0.05, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups on the dependent variable (Pallant, 2016:247).

An ANOVA test is similar to an independent t-test in that it tests for the significant difference between group means from data that have been gathered (Kerr *et al.*, 2002:79). Therefore, it is an overall test to determine whether group means differ (Field, 2005:724). The requirements for an ANOVA test are a) one categorical independent variable with three or more distinct categories groups (e.g. marital status categories), b) one continuous variable (e.g. workplace bullying) (Pallant, 2016:256) and c) within each group, the variances of the dependent variable should be the same (Pallant, 2016:208). A further requirement is that the dependent variable should be normally distributed; however, if the sample size is large, it is not critical for the distribution to be normal (Eiselen & Uys, 2021:89). If the significance value (sig.) is less than 0.05, there is a significant difference somewhere among the mean scores for the different groups on the dependent variable, and vice versa. To determine which groups have significantly different means, the results of the appropriate post hoc tests should be examined (Pallant, 2016:259).

Effect sizes are used to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables. Effect size explains how meaningful the relationships between variables or groups are (Mvorganizing, 2021). Cohen's d-values are used as effect sizes to determine whether differences in means are important in practice. Cohen's d is an appropriate effect size to compare the differences between two means and is often used to accompany the reporting of t-test and ANOVA results (McLeod, 2019). Cohen suggests that a d-value equal to 0.2 represents a small effect size, 0.5 represents a medium effect size and 0.8 represents a large effect size (Rice & Harris, 2005:618–619).

#### **4.2.2      *Qualitative phase***

For the qualitative phase of the study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews (using an interview schedule) or an open-ended questionnaire (based on the interview schedule). The aim of the interviews or open-ended questionnaires was to obtain the opinions of keystone individuals (deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative) regarding their perspectives on workplace bullying from an organisational, departmental and institutional point of view.

An invitation email (see Annexure D) was sent to 150 prospective participants to participate in the research. The invitation email introduced the research study, explained the purpose of the interviews and explained why the participants were asked to participate in the interviews. Furthermore, the email indicated that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that all efforts would be made to protect the participants and to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanied challenges, the email made it clear that interviews would not be conducted in person, but would take place via the video meeting platforms Zoom or Skype. If preferred, research participants could provide their responses in written format on an open-ended questionnaire. Ten participants indicated their willingness to participate in the research. Once the participants indicated their willingness to participate in the research, the researcher contacted the participants to determine whether they would be willing to participate in an online interview (via Zoom or Skype) or by completing an open-ended questionnaire. Once determined, the researcher scheduled an interview with the participants or emailed the questionnaire. In all instances, the research participants were required to first complete an informed consent form (see Annexure C) before participating in the research. Informed consent was also obtained to record the interviews.

Two different interview schedules (or questionnaires) were created: the first to obtain the perceptions of deans, deputy deans and school directors regarding bullying behaviour in their working environments and measures in place in the institution to counter this behaviour, and the second to obtain the perceptions of a People and Culture representative regarding the experiences of workplace bullying in the institution and/or in his/her working environment and measures in place in the institution to counter this behaviour. The researcher recorded the data obtained from the online interviews through handwritten notes, videotaping or audiotaping, as suggested by Creswell (2014:194).

Although there is a variety of inductive and deductive approaches to analysing qualitative data, thematic analysis was used by the researcher to analyse the qualitative data of this study (see Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013:399). In general, the intent of data analysis is to make sense of text and image data that have been collected by the researcher (Creswell, 2014:195). Due to the dense and rich nature of qualitative data, the researcher focused on some of the data and disregarded the rest (see Creswell, 2014:195). The main focus of this process is to condense the collected data into themes that are then discussed. The themes that are identified should display multiple perspectives from the participants and should be supported by specific evidence and diverse quotations (Creswell, 2014:200). The researcher identified nine themes based on the two interview schedules used to collect the data (see section 4.4). The responses of the participants were studied and specific replies were chosen to support the themes. The researcher assigned numerical values to the different participants who took part in the qualitative phase of the study (e.g. Participant 1 is referred to as P1, etc.) in order to protect the identity of the participants. Furthermore, pseudonyms were assigned to the different sites of delivery of the university under investigation to further protect the identity of the participants (e.g. Campus A, B or C).

The section to follow presents and discusses the empirical results of the quantitative phase of the study.

### **4.3 EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA**

This section presents the results of the web-based survey. Firstly, the biographical information is presented, followed by the results of the workplace bullying (descriptive statistics and confirmatory factor analysis) and policies and practices (descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis)

scales. Thereafter, the results of the independent sample t-tests, ANOVAs, effect sizes and Spearman's rank-order correlations are presented and discussed.

#### **4.3.1 Biographical information**

As noted in Chapter 1 under section 1.6.2.2, the research was conducted at one higher education institution in South Africa. The study sample consisted of an all-inclusive sample of academic and support staff across the higher education institution. A total of 282 responses were received for the online questionnaire. Table 4.1 reflects the biographical information of the respondents.

**Table 4.1: Biographical information**

| Biographical information                    |                |     |      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|
| Item                                        | Category       | N   | %    |
| With which gender do you identify yourself? | Female         | 194 | 68.8 |
|                                             | Male           | 87  | 30.9 |
| At which campus do you work?                | A              | 205 | 72.7 |
|                                             | B              | 45  | 16.0 |
|                                             | C              | 32  | 11.3 |
| What is your age in years?                  | 19 and younger | 0   | 0.0  |
|                                             | 20–29          | 33  | 11.7 |
|                                             | 30–39          | 84  | 29.8 |
|                                             | 40–49          | 87  | 30.9 |
|                                             | 50–59          | 59  | 20.9 |
|                                             | 60 and older   | 19  | 6.7  |

| Biographical information                                    |                                         |     |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|
| Item                                                        | Category                                | N   | %    |
| <b>Marital status</b>                                       | Single or not in a relationship         | 45  | 16.0 |
|                                                             | Unmarried and in a relationship         | 38  | 13.5 |
|                                                             | Widowed                                 | 6   | 2.1  |
|                                                             | Married                                 | 174 | 61.9 |
|                                                             | Divorced/Separated                      | 15  | 5.3  |
|                                                             | Prefer not to say                       | 3   | 1.1  |
| <b>What is your highest qualification?</b>                  | Less than high (secondary) school       | 0.0 | 0.0  |
|                                                             | Completed some high (secondary) school  | 0.0 | 0.0  |
|                                                             | High (secondary) school graduate        | 12  | 4.3  |
|                                                             | Completed some college education        | 17  | 6.0  |
|                                                             | Undergone technical/vocational training | 1   | 0.4  |
|                                                             | College/University degree               | 39  | 13.8 |
|                                                             | Completed some postgraduate work        | 9   | 3.2  |
|                                                             | Postgraduate degree                     | 105 | 37.2 |
|                                                             | PhD                                     | 99  | 35.1 |
| <b>How long have you been working in this organisation?</b> | 0–6 months                              | 8   | 2.8  |
|                                                             | 7–12 months                             | 10  | 3.5  |
|                                                             | 1–2 years                               | 31  | 11.0 |
|                                                             | 3–5 years                               | 46  | 16.3 |
|                                                             | 6–10 years                              | 76  | 27.0 |
|                                                             | 11-20 years                             | 81  | 28.7 |
|                                                             | More than 20 years                      | 30  | 10.6 |

| Biographical information                             |                                |     |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| Item                                                 | Category                       | N   | %    |
| What is your nature of employment at the university? | Academic                       | 138 | 49.6 |
|                                                      | Support                        | 136 | 48.9 |
|                                                      | Other                          | 4   | 1.4  |
| What is your employment contract at the university?  | Full-time contract (permanent) | 248 | 88.6 |
|                                                      | Fixed-term contract            | 18  | 6.4  |
|                                                      | Temporary                      | 10  | 3.6  |
|                                                      | Postdoctoral fellowship        | 3   | 1.1  |
|                                                      | Ad hoc                         | 1   | 0.4  |

#### 4.3.1.1 Gender

Table 4.1 reflects the breakdown of respondents in terms of gender. Table 4.1 indicates that 68.8% (194) of the respondents were female and 30.9% (87) were male.

#### 4.3.1.2 Campus

Table 4.1 reflects the breakdown of respondents according to the site of delivery at which they worked. Due to the confidential nature of the collected data, the institutions were named Campus A, B and C. According to Table 4.1, 72.1% (205) of the respondents worked at Campus A, 16% (45) at Campus B and 11.3% (32) at Campus C.

#### 4.3.1.3 Age

From the descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.1 it is evident that there were no respondents in the age category 19 years and younger who participated in the study. Most of the respondents were from the age categories 30–39 (29.8%; 33), 40–49 (30.9%; 87) and 50–59 (20.9%; 59). The age categories with the lowest percentage of respondents were 20–29 (11.7%; 33) and 60 and older (6.7%; 19).

#### 4.3.1.4 Marital status

From the descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.1 it is evident that the majority of the respondents who took part in the quantitative phase of the study were married (61.9%; 174). Those indicating that they were single or not in a relationship represented 16% (45) of the respondents, and those indicating that they were in a relationship but were unmarried represented 13.5% (38) of the respondents. Only 2.1% (6) of the respondents indicated that they were widowed, 5.3% (15) indicated that they were divorced/separated and 1.1% (3) indicated that they preferred not to say.

#### 4.3.1.5 Highest qualification

Table 4.1 reflects the breakdown of respondents according to highest qualification. From Table 4.1 it is evident that the majority of the respondents indicated that they had either a postgraduate degree (37.2%; 105) or a PhD (35.1%; 99). A relatively smaller number of respondents indicated that they had a college or university degree (13.8%; 39), had completed some postgraduate work (3.2%; 9), had undergone technical/vocational training (0.4%; 1), had completed some college education (6.0%; 17) and were a high (secondary) school graduate (4.3%; 12).

#### 4.3.1.6 Length of employment

According to the descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.1, the length of employment of the respondents ranged between 0 and 6 months and more than 20 years of work experience. The majority of the respondents had been working at the institution between 6 and 10 years (27.0%; 76) and 11 and 20 years (28.7%; 81). Furthermore, 6.3% (18) of the respondents indicated that they had been working at the institution between 0 and 12 months, 11.0% (31) between 1 and 2 years, 16.3% (46) between 3 and 5 years and 10.6% (30) more than 20 years.

#### 4.3.1.7 Nature of employment

The study aimed at obtaining the opinions of academic staff and support staff across the institution. According to Table 4.1, academic staff represented 49.6% (138) and support staff 48.9% (136) of the respondents. Only 1.4% (4) of the respondents selected the category “Other” as nature of employment.

#### 4.3.1.8 Employment contracts

Table 4.1 reflects the nature of the employment contract of the respondents who took part in the study. A large majority (88.6%; 246) of the respondents indicated that they were employed in full-time contracts at the institution. Only a limited number of respondents were employed in fixed-term contracts (6.4%; 18), temporary contracts (3.6%; 10), postdoctoral fellowships (1.1%; 3) and ad hoc contracts (0.4%; 1).

### 4.3.2 *Workplace bullying*

This section presents the descriptive statistics of the workplace bullying scale as well as the results of the confirmatory factor analyses.

#### 4.3.2.1 Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying

Section B of the online questionnaire measured the perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work among the academic and support staff at the higher education institution. A five-point Likert-type scale consisting of the following response categories were used: “Never” (1), “Now and then” (2), “Monthly” (3), “Weekly” (4) and “Daily” (5). The mean value was measured according to its position on the Likert scale. The closer the mean was to 5, the more frequently the experiences of bullying behaviour, the closer to 1, the fewer the experiences of bullying behaviour. Table 4.2 reflects the descriptive statistics of workplace bullying.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying**

| Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying |                                                                                                            |     |         |         |      |                    |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| No.                                          | Item                                                                                                       | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard deviation |
| 1.                                           | Someone withholding information which affects your performance                                             | 279 | 1       | 5       | 2.15 | 1.145              |
| 2.                                           | Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work                                                 | 281 | 1       | 5       | 1.72 | 0.943              |
| 3.                                           | Being ordered to do work below your level of competence                                                    | 281 | 1       | 5       | 2.01 | 1.115              |
| 4.                                           | Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks               | 278 | 1       | 5       | 1.76 | 1.100              |
| 5.                                           | Spreading of gossip and rumours about you                                                                  | 280 | 1       | 5       | 1.95 | 1.124              |
| 6.                                           | Being ignored                                                                                              | 281 | 1       | 5       | 2.16 | 1.216              |
| 7.                                           | Being excluded                                                                                             | 279 | 1       | 5       | 2.30 | 1.224              |
| 8.                                           | Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or private life                    | 280 | 1       | 5       | 1.65 | 1.004              |
| 9.                                           | Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger                                                  | 282 | 1       | 5       | 1.60 | 0.924              |
| 10.                                          | Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving and blocking your way | 279 | 1       | 5       | 1.30 | 0.711              |
| 11.                                          | Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job                                                 | 282 | 1       | 5       | 1.38 | 0.742              |
| 12.                                          | Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes                                                              | 281 | 1       | 5       | 1.52 | 0.837              |
| 13.                                          | Being ignored when you approach                                                                            | 282 | 1       | 5       | 1.68 | 0.987              |
| 14.                                          | Facing a hostile reaction when you approach                                                                | 279 | 1       | 5       | 1.73 | 1.012              |
| 15.                                          | Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes                                                            | 280 | 1       | 5       | 1.50 | 0.855              |
| 16.                                          | Having your opinions ignored                                                                               | 280 | 1       | 5       | 2.14 | 1.142              |
| 17.                                          | Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with                                             | 279 | 1       | 5       | 1.24 | 0.559              |
| 18.                                          | Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines                                                              | 279 | 1       | 5       | 1.83 | 1.027              |
| 19.                                          | Having allegations made against you                                                                        | 278 | 1       | 5       | 1.60 | 0.880              |

| Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying |                                                                                                                            |     |         |         |      |                    |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| No.                                          | Item                                                                                                                       | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard deviation |
| 20.                                          | Excessive monitoring of your work                                                                                          | 280 | 1       | 5       | 1.81 | 1.102              |
| 21.                                          | Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses) | 279 | 1       | 5       | 1.53 | 0.936              |
| 22.                                          | Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm                                                                         | 280 | 1       | 5       | 1.29 | 0.620              |
| 23.                                          | Being exposed to an unmanageable workload                                                                                  | 279 | 1       | 5       | 2.00 | 1.138              |
| 24.                                          | Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse                                                                      | 280 | 1       | 5       | 1.08 | 0.444              |

Table 4.2 shows that the means for the individual items of the workplace bullying scale measured between 1 and 2.30, indicating that the respondents' responses ranged between "Never", "Now and then" and "Monthly". None of the means for the items in the scale were higher than 3, which indicates that, on average, the respondents were not exposed to bullying and victimisation at work on a "Weekly" and "Daily" basis. The following items obtained the highest mean scores: 7 (Being excluded; M = 2.30), 6 (Being ignored; M = 2.16), 1 (Someone withholding information which affects your performance; M = 2.15), 16 (Having your opinions ignored; M = 2.14) and 3 (Being ordered to do work below your level of competence; M = 2.01). The following items obtained the lowest mean scores: 24 (Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse; M = 1.08), 17 (Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with; M = 1.24), 22 (Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm, M = 1.29), 10 (Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving and blocking your way; M = 1.30) and 11 (Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job; M = 1.38).

Although the descriptive statistics revealed that some respondents were subjected to bullying and victimisation at the institution now and then and on a monthly basis, on average, the respondents did not indicate that they experienced the items depicted in Table 4.2 on a weekly or a daily basis.

The standard deviation of all the items in the scale ranged between 0.44 (Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse) and 1.15 (Someone withholding information which affects your

performance). This indicates among the respondents, there were few who indicated that the acts occurred on a regular basis.

#### 4.3.2.2 Reliability and confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model for workplace bullying

Section B of the questionnaire measured the perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work among the academic and support staff at the higher education institution. Section B consisted of 24 statements that measured work-related bullying (seven items: Q1, 3, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23), physically intimidating bullying (three items: Q9, 10, 24) and person-related bullying (14 items: Q2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22).

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the structure and relations between the latent variables that underlay the data. Figure 4.1 presents the results for the measurement model with standardised regression weights and correlations.

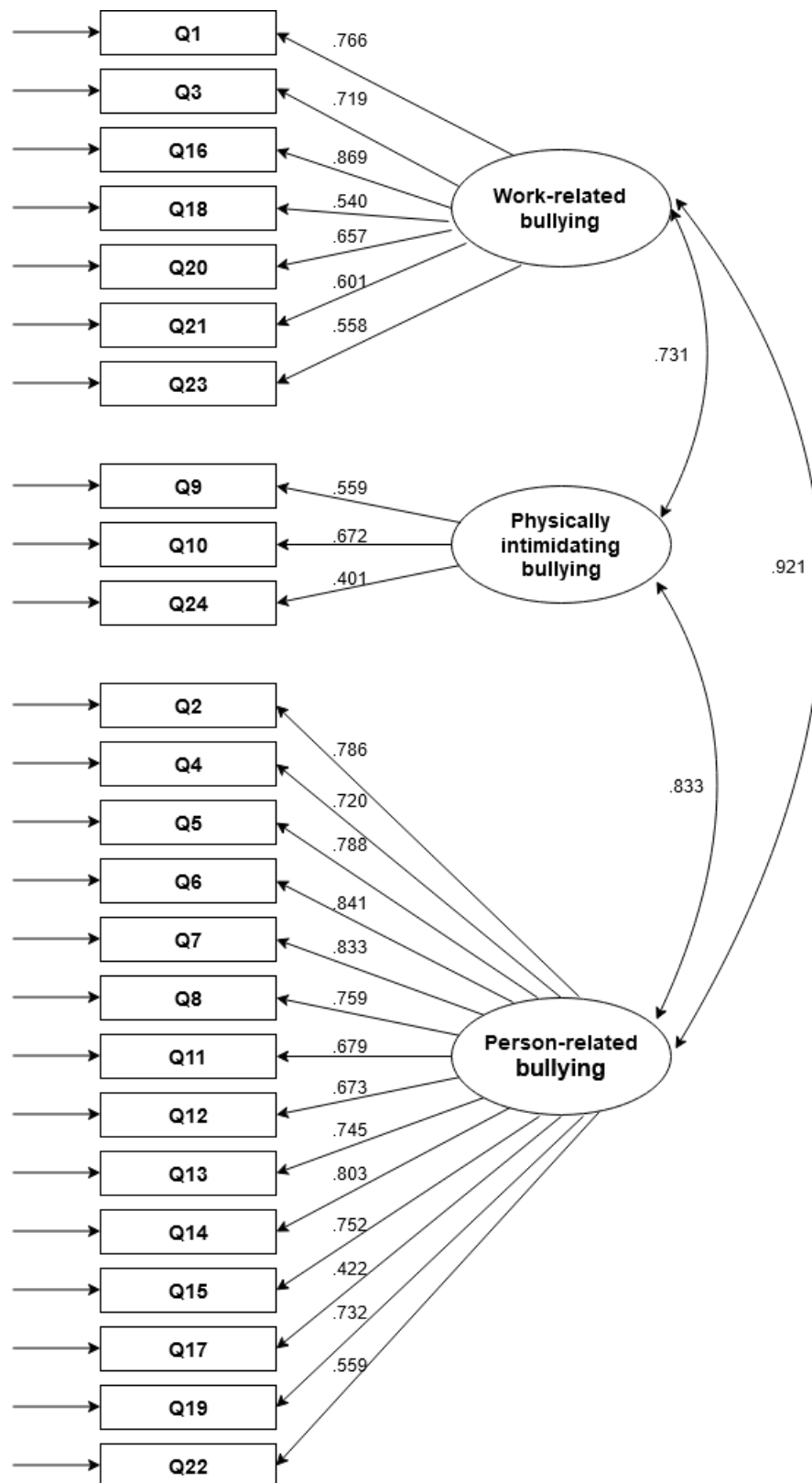


Figure 4.1: Confirmatory factor analysis results for the measurement model with standardised regression weights and correlations

All factor loadings were statistically significant at the 0.05 level: for work-related bullying (ranging from 0.540 to 0.869), for physically intimidating bullying (ranging from 0.401 to 0.672) and for person-related bullying (ranging from 0.422 to 0.841).

Three goodness-of-model-fit indices were used to determine how well the measurement model fit the data of the sample: CMIN/DF, CFI and RMSEA with its 90% confidence intervals. Hancock and Mueller (2010) recommend it is good practice to report multiple fit indices, preferably from three broad classes. Table 4.3 presents the results of the goodness-of-model-fit indices.

**Table 4.3: Goodness-of-model-fit indices**

| Index          | Decision rule                                                                            | Source                                                                                               | Model score          | Outcome        |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <b>CMIN/DF</b> | Close to 1; 3–5 still satisfactory                                                       | Mueller (1996)<br>Paswan (cited by Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:585)                               | 4.628                | Acceptable fit |
| <b>CFI</b>     | $\geq 0.9$ (good fit)                                                                    | Hair <i>et al.</i> (2010)<br>Mueller (1996)                                                          | 0.801                | Not good fit   |
| <b>RMSEA</b>   | $\leq 0.06$ (good fit)<br>$\leq 0.08$ (adequate fit)<br>$\leq 0.10$ (still satisfactory) | Hu and Bentler (1999:1)<br>Brown and Cudeck (cited by Nordlund & Garvill, 2002:251)<br>Blunch (2008) | 0.114 [0.107; 0.120] | Not good fit   |

As indicated in section 4.2.1, a CMIN/DF value less than 2 and close to 1 represents a good model data fit (Arbuckle, 2013:623, Paswan, cited by Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:585); however, values that range between 2 and 5 are still considered an acceptable fit (Mueller, 1996; Paswan, cited by Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:585). The measurement model yielded a CMIN/DF value of 4.62, indicating an acceptable fit.

CFI values vary between 0 and 1; a CFI value close to 1 (0.90 to 0.95) indicates a good model fit (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994:662; Mueller, 1996; Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:586). A CFI value of 0.80 was obtained for the measurement model, indicating not a good fit.

An RMSEA value of 0.06 represents a good model data fit (Brown & Cudeck, cited by Nordlund & Garvill, 2002:251; Hu & Bentler, 1999:1) and a value of 0.08 an adequate model data fit (Shadfar

& Malekmohammadi, 2013:588) An RMSEA value of 0.10 is considered to be a poor fit (Dixon & Dixon, 2010:117). The measurement model obtained an RMSEA value of 0.114 with a 90% confidence interval of 0.107 (low) and 0.120 (high), indicating not a good model data fit. Table 4.4 presents the reliability statistics of the measurement model.

**Table 4.4: Reliability statistics of the measurement model**

| Reliability statistics           |                  |                                              |                 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Factor                           | Cronbach's alpha | Cronbach's alpha based on standardised Items | Number of items |
| Work-related bullying            | 0.865            | 0.865                                        | 7               |
| Person-related bullying          | 0.939            | 0.939                                        | 14              |
| Physically intimidating bullying | 0.656            | 0.685                                        | 3               |

From Table 4.4 it is evident that *Work-related bullying* obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.865, *Person-related bullying* a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.939 and *Physically intimidating bullying* a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.656. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of *Work-related bullying* and *Person-related bullying* measured well above the required 0.7, indicating high reliability and internal consistency of the scales, as suggested by Field (2005:667). However, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of *Physically intimidating bullying* measured slightly below 0.7, which could be regarded as a relatively low reliability. According to Briggs and Cheek (cited by Pallant, 2016:101), the number of the items in a scale can influence the value obtained for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The authors state that a scale with fewer than 10 items might result in a low value.

Table 4.5 presents the descriptive statistics of the measurement model. The following five-point Likert-type scale was used: "Never" (1), "Now and then" (2), "Monthly" (3), "Weekly" (4) and "Daily" (5).

**Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics of the measurement model**

| Descriptive statistics           |     |         |         |        |                |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
|                                  | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. deviation |
| Work-related bullying            | 282 | 1.00    | 4.57    | 1.9335 | 0.81263        |
| Person-related bullying          | 282 | 1.00    | 4.57    | 1.6788 | 0.71307        |
| Physically intimidating bullying | 282 | 1.00    | 4.67    | 1.3286 | 0.55391        |

Table 4.5 shows that *Work-related bullying* obtained a mean score of 1.9, *Person-related bullying* a mean score of 1.68 and *Physically intimidating bullying* a mean score of 1.33. This indicates that, on average, the respondents were more exposed to work-related and person-related bullying than to physically intimidating bullying at work.

Due to the measurement model analysed not yielding results of an adequate or good fit for more than one of the fit indices, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on workplace bullying (Section B of the questionnaire).

#### 4.3.2.3 Exploratory factor analysis of workplace bullying

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 24 Likert-type scale items measuring perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work (Section B of the questionnaire). Principal component analysis and oblimin rotation were used. Table 4.6 presents the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

**Table 4.6: KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity**

| KMO and Bartlett's test          |                    |          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| KMO measure of sampling adequacy |                    | 0.942    |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity    | Approx. chi-square | 4619.564 |
|                                  | df                 | 276      |
|                                  | Sig.               | 0.000    |

The KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity determine whether there is substantial correlation between the variables included in the scale to proceed with the factor analysis (Eiselen & Uys,

2016:111). The KMO should be greater than 0.6 in order to show sufficient correlation between pairs of items (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:111). The KMO test yielded a value of 0.942 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity a value smaller than 0.05, indicating that the correlation between items was sufficient for factor analysis (see Eiselen & Uys, 2016:111; Field, 2005).

Table 4.7 presents the total variance explained of workplace bullying. The table explains how much variance the factors explains, thereby indicating to what extent the specific linear combination of all the items is explained by that factor (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:113). Each factor that was identified represents all of the items, but the weight of any one item within a factor differs (see Eiselen & Uys, 2016:113). Only the factors that had an eigenvalue larger or equal to 1 should be extracted and utilised (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:113).

**Table 4.7: Total variance explained**

| Component | Initial eigenvalues |               |        | Extraction sums of squared loadings |               |              | Rotation sums of squared loadings <sup>a</sup> |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------|
|           | Total               | % of variance | Total  | Total                               | % of variance | Cumulative % | Total                                          |
| 1         | 11.665              | 48.606        | 48.606 | 11.665                              | 48.606        | 48.606       | 9.324                                          |
| 2         | 1.859               | 7.746         | 56.351 | 1.859                               | 7.746         | 56.351       | 4.576                                          |
| 3         | 1.396               | 5.817         | 62.168 | 1.396                               | 5.817         | 62.168       | 5.471                                          |
| 4         | 1.019               | 4.246         | 66.414 | 1.019                               | 4.246         | 66.414       | 8.538                                          |
| 5         | 0.815               | 3.395         | 69.809 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 6         | 0.747               | 3.114         | 72.923 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 7         | 0.638               | 2.657         | 75.580 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 8         | 0.618               | 2.575         | 78.155 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 9         | 0.580               | 2.417         | 80.572 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 10        | 0.533               | 2.221         | 82.794 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 11        | 0.483               | 2.013         | 84.806 |                                     |               |              |                                                |

Table 4.7 shows that the four factors explained 66.414% of the variance of the workplace bullying scale. This percentage is relatively high and considered to be acceptable (Eiselen & Uys, 2016:114). Table 4.8 presents the pattern matrix of workplace bullying.

**Table 4.8: Pattern matrix<sup>a</sup>**

| Workplace bullying |                                                                                                            |             |             |                       |                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                    |                                                                                                            | Factor<br>1 | Factor<br>2 | Factor<br>3           | Factor<br>4                  |
|                    | Item                                                                                                       | Exclusion   | Hostility   | Managerial misconduct | Humiliation and belittlement |
| Q6                 | Being ignored                                                                                              | 0.869       |             |                       |                              |
| Q1                 | Someone withholding information which affects your performance                                             | 0.834       |             |                       |                              |
| Q7                 | Being excluded                                                                                             | 0.797       |             |                       |                              |
| Q3                 | Being ordered to do work below your level of competence                                                    | 0.738       |             |                       |                              |
| Q16                | Having your opinions ignored                                                                               | 0.726       |             |                       |                              |
| Q13                | Being ignored when you approach                                                                            | 0.667       |             |                       |                              |
| Q4                 | Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks               | 0.629       |             |                       |                              |
| Q11                | Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job                                                 | 0.427       |             |                       | -0.350                       |
| Q24                | Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse                                                      |             | 0.792       |                       |                              |
| Q17                | Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with                                             |             | 0.749       |                       |                              |
| Q22                | Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm                                                         |             | 0.633       |                       |                              |
| Q10                | Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving and blocking your way |             | 0.525       |                       | -0.483                       |

| Workplace bullying |                                                                                                                            |             |             |                       |                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                    |                                                                                                                            | Factor<br>1 | Factor<br>2 | Factor<br>3           | Factor<br>4                  |
|                    | Item                                                                                                                       | Exclusion   | Hostility   | Managerial misconduct | Humiliation and belittlement |
| Q18                | Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines                                                                              |             |             | 0.841                 |                              |
| Q23                | Being exposed to an unmanageable workload                                                                                  |             |             | 0.775                 |                              |
| Q20                | Excessive monitoring of your work                                                                                          |             |             | 0.616                 |                              |
| Q21                | Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses) |             | 0.330       | 0.475                 |                              |
| Q8                 | Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life                               |             |             |                       | 0.705                        |
| Q19                | Having allegations made against you                                                                                        |             |             |                       | 0.664                        |
| Q2                 | Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work                                                                 |             |             |                       | 0.662                        |
| Q12                | Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes                                                                              |             |             |                       | 0.660                        |
| Q15                | Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes                                                                            |             |             |                       | 0.609                        |
| Q14                | Facing a hostile reaction when you approach                                                                                | 0.368       |             |                       | 0.567                        |
| Q5                 | Spreading of gossip and rumours about you                                                                                  | 0.365       |             |                       | 0.557                        |
| Q9                 | Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger                                                                  |             |             |                       | 0.505                        |
| Cronbach's alpha   |                                                                                                                            | 0.928       | 0.765       | 0.787                 | 0.920                        |
| Factor mean        |                                                                                                                            | 1.95        | 1.23        | 1.79                  | 1.66                         |
| Standard deviation |                                                                                                                            | 0.89        | 0.45        | 0.83                  | 0.76                         |

Table 4.8 indicates that four factors, namely *Exclusion*, *Hostility*, *Managerial misconduct* and *Humiliation and belittlement*, were extracted through Kaiser's criteria (see Field, 2005) that explained 66.41 of the total variance.

**Factor 1: Exclusion.** Eight items (Q1, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q13, Q16) loaded on Factor 1: *Exclusion*, ranging from 0.427 to 0.869. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.928, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 1.95, which indicates that, on average, the respondents reported that they were exposed to *Exclusion* "Now and then" (2). The standard deviation was 0.89.

**Factor 2: Hostility.** Four items (Q10, Q17, Q22, Q24) loaded on Factor 2: *Hostility*, ranging from 0.525 to 0.792. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.765, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 1.23, which indicates that, on average, the respondents reported that they were exposed to *Hostility* between "Never" (1) and "Now and then" (2). The standard deviation was 0.45.

**Factor 3: Managerial misconduct.** Four items (Q18, Q20, Q21, Q23) loaded on Factor 3: *Managerial misconduct*, ranging from 0.475 to 0.841. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.787, which is above the required 0.7, and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 1.79, which indicates that, on average, the respondents' answers ranged between "Never" (1) and "Now and then" (2). The standard deviation was 0.83.

**Factor 4: Humiliation and belittlement.** Eight items (Q1, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q13, Q16) loaded on Factor 4: *Humiliation and belittlement*, ranging from 0.505 to 0.705. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.928, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 1.66, which indicates that, on average, the respondents' answers ranged between "Never" (1) and "Now and then" (2). The standard deviation was 0.76.

#### 4.3.2.4 Confirmatory factor analysis of the four-factor workplace bullying model

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the structure and relations between the latent variables that underlay the data of the four-factor workplace bullying model; the results are presented in Figure 4.2.

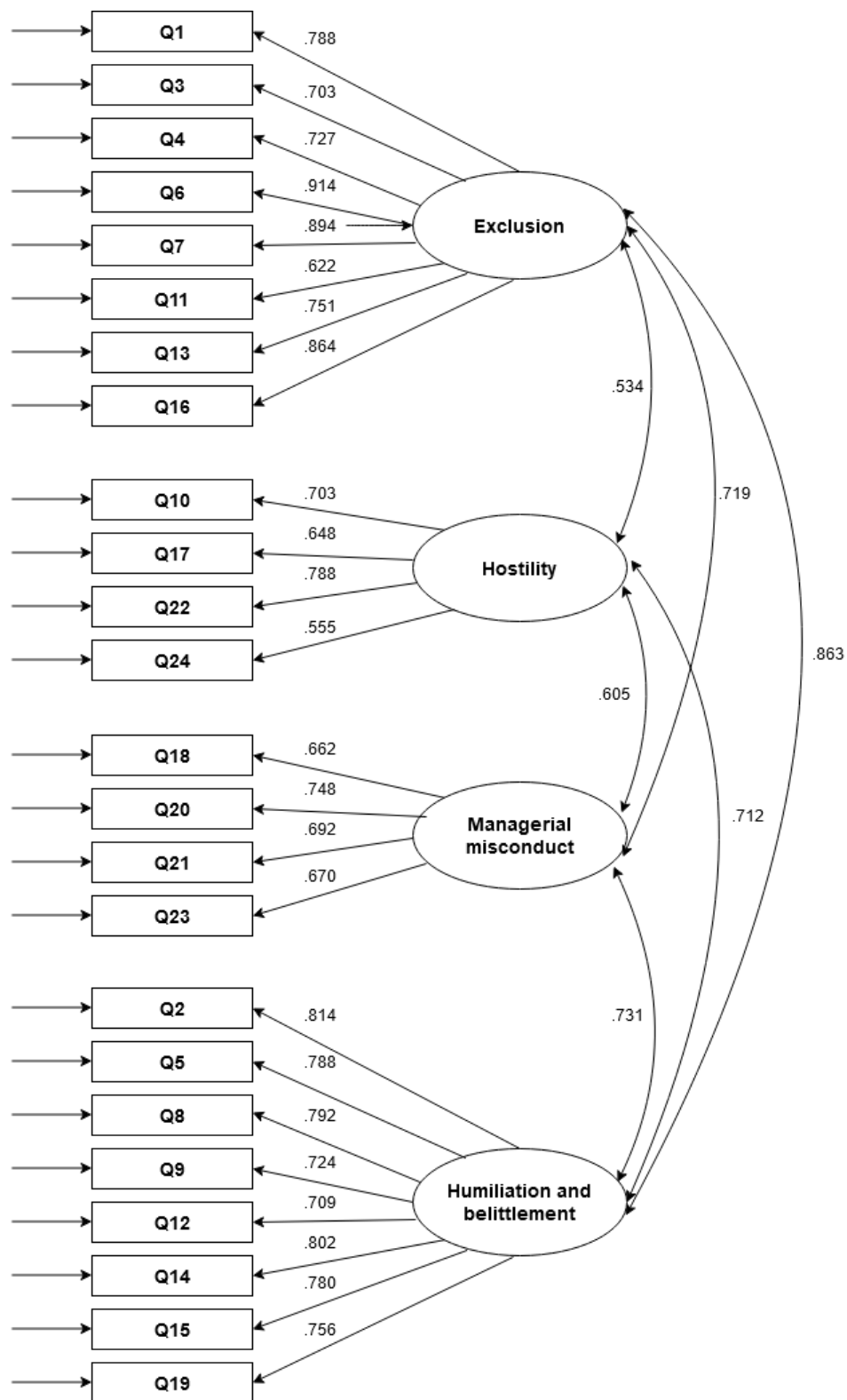


Figure 4.2: Confirmatory factor analysis results for the four-factor workplace bullying model with standardised regression weights and correlations

All factor loadings were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The standardised regression coefficients were interpreted as factor loadings. Factor loadings ranged from 0.622 to 0.914 for *Exclusion*, from 0.555 to 0.788 for *Hostility*, from 0.662 to 0.748 for *Managerial misconduct* and from 0.709 to 0.814 for *Humiliation and belittlement*.

Table 4.9 presents the results of the goodness-of-model-fit indices. Three goodness-of-model-fit indices were used to determine how well the model fit the data of the sample, namely CMIN/DF, CFI and RMSEA with its 90% confidence intervals.

**Table 4.9: Goodness-of-model-fit indices**

| Index          | Decision rule                                                             | Source                                                                                               | Model score          | Outcome        |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <b>CMIN/DF</b> | Close to 1; 3–5 still satisfactory                                        | Mueller (1996)<br>Paswan (cited by Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:585)                               | 3.218                | Acceptable fit |
| <b>CFI</b>     | ≥ 0.9 (good fit)                                                          | Hair <i>et al.</i> (2010)<br>Mueller (1996)                                                          | 0.880                | Acceptable fit |
| <b>RMSEA</b>   | ≤ 0.06 (good fit)<br>≤ 0.08 (adequate fit)<br>≤ 0.10 (still satisfactory) | Hu and Bentler (1999:1)<br>Brown and Cudeck (cited by Nordlund & Garvill, 2002:251)<br>Blunch (2008) | 0.089 [0.082; 0.096] | Acceptable fit |

The four-factor workplace bullying model yielded a CMIN/DF value of 3.21, indicating an acceptable model data fit according to Mueller (1996) and Paswan (cited by Shadfar & Malekmohammadi, 2013:585). A CFI value of 0.88 was obtained for the model, indicating an acceptable model data fit. According to Hair *et al.* (2010) and Mueller (1996), CFI values above 0.9 indicate a good overall fit. The model obtained an RMSEA value of 0.089 with a 90% confidence interval of 0.082 (low) and 0.096 (high), indicating an acceptable model data fit. According to Dixon and Dixon (2010:117), Shadfar and Malekmohammadi (2013:588) and Blunch (2008), an RMSEA value of 0.10 is considered to be a poor fit. Table 4.10 presents the reliability statistics of the measurement model.

**Table 4.10: Reliability statistics of workplace bullying**

| Reliability statistics       |                  |                                              |                 |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Factor                       | Cronbach's alpha | Cronbach's alpha based on standardised Items | Number of items |
| Exclusion                    | 0.928            | 0.927                                        | 8               |
| Hostility                    | 0.765            | 0.774                                        | 4               |
| Managerial misconduct        | 0.787            | 0.789                                        | 4               |
| Humiliation and belittlement | 0.920            | 0.921                                        | 8               |

From Table 4.10 it is evident that *Exclusion* obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.928, *Hostility* a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.765, *Managerial misconduct* a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.787 and *Humiliation and belittlement* a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.920. Therefore, all factors yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.7, indicating high reliability and internal consistency.

Table 4.11 presents the descriptive statistics of the four-factor workplace bullying model. The following five-point Likert-type scale was used: "Never" (1), "Now and then" (2), "Monthly" (3), "Weekly" (4) and "Daily" (5).

**Table 4.11: Descriptive statistics of workplace bullying**

| Descriptive statistics       |     |         |         |        |                |
|------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
|                              | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. deviation |
| Exclusion                    | 282 | 1.00    | 4.88    | 1.9486 | 0.88886        |
| Hostility                    | 282 | 1.00    | 4.75    | 1.2270 | 0.45226        |
| Managerial misconduct        | 280 | 1.00    | 4.75    | 1.7938 | 0.82529        |
| Humiliation and belittlement | 282 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 1.6620 | 0.76235        |

Table 4.11 shows that *Exclusion* obtained a mean score of 1.94, *Hostility* a mean score of 1.22, *Managerial misconduct* a mean score of 1.79 and *Humiliation and belittlement* a mean score of 1.66. This indicates that, on average, the respondents reported that *Exclusion*, *Managerial misconduct* and *Humiliation and belittlement* occurred more often ("Now and then" (2)) than *Hostility* (closer to "Never" (1)). The next section presents and discusses the empirical results of the policies and practices scale.

### 4.3.3 Policies and practices

This section presents the descriptive statistics of the policies and practices scale as well as the results of the exploratory factor analyses.

#### 4.3.3.1 Descriptive statistics of policies and practices

Section C of the online questionnaire measured the perceptions of the respondents on policies and practices in place to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution. A four-point Likert-type scale was used consisting of the following categories: “Not at all” (1), “To some extent” (2), “To a moderate extent” (3) and “To a great extent” (4). The mean value was measured according to its position on the Likert scale. The closer the mean was to 4, the more positive the perceptions of the respondents; the closer to 1, the more negative the perceptions of the respondents. Table 4.12 reflects the descriptive statistics of policies and practices.

**Table 4.12: Descriptive statistics of policies and practices**

| Descriptive statistics of policies and practices |                                                                                                                                                                              |     |         |         |      |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| No.                                              | Item                                                                                                                                                                         | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard deviation |
| 1.                                               | The institution (university) I work for has a policy in place to regulate inappropriate workplace behaviour such as workplace bullying                                       | 203 | 1       | 4       | 2.69 | 1.051              |
| 2.                                               | The institution (university) I work for has a zero-tolerance policy statement on workplace bullying                                                                          | 190 | 1       | 4       | 2.57 | 1.123              |
| 3.                                               | The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing the occurrence of physical aggression                                      | 216 | 1       | 4       | 2.91 | 1.090              |
| 4.                                               | The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing non-physical (verbal or psychological) aggression from occurring           | 231 | 1       | 4       | 2.50 | 1.142              |
| 5.                                               | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a physically aggressive or threatening manner at the institution I work for | 246 | 1       | 4       | 2.85 | 1.074              |
| 6.                                               | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a hostile manner at the institution I work for                              | 245 | 1       | 4       | 2.60 | 1.099              |

| Descriptive statistics of policies and practices |                                                                                                                                                                             |     |         |         |      |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| No.                                              | Item                                                                                                                                                                        | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard deviation |
| 7.                                               | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a verbally aggressive manner at the institution I work for                 | 246 | 1       | 4       | 2.50 | 1.102              |
| 8.                                               | If someone files a formal complaint about physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously                                      | 229 | 1       | 4       | 3.07 | 1.017              |
| 9.                                               | If someone files a formal complaint about non-physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously                                  | 236 | 1       | 4       | 2.58 | 1.087              |
| 10.                                              | I believe that people can get away with being aggressive towards colleagues at the institution (university) I work for                                                      | 257 | 1       | 4       | 2.72 | 1.092              |
| 11.                                              | I believe that people can get away with being hostile towards colleagues at the institution (university) I work for                                                         | 258 | 1       | 4       | 2.76 | 1.063              |
| 12.                                              | The institution (university) I work for has support systems (e.g. counselling) in place to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying)    | 236 | 1       | 4       | 3.02 | 0.989              |
| 13.                                              | Life-skills training are offered to assist employees in dealing with inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) at the institution (university) I work for | 214 | 1       | 4       | 2.70 | 1.069              |
| 14.                                              | I know what procedures to follow to lodge a complaint of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) at the institution (university) I work for             | 215 | 1       | 4       | 2.57 | 1.121              |
| 15.                                              | I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to the human resource department without fear of recourse                          | 268 | 1       | 4       | 1.99 | 1.098              |
| 16.                                              | I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to my manager without fear of recourse                                             | 273 | 1       | 4       | 2.31 | 1.237              |
| 17.                                              | The leadership in my working environment is capable of addressing workplace bullying                                                                                        | 252 | 1       | 4       | 2.42 | 1.170              |
| 18.                                              | I will feel protected by management should I become a victim of workplace bullying                                                                                          | 257 | 1       | 4       | 2.27 | 1.180              |

| Descriptive statistics of policies and practices |                                                                                                                                       |     |         |         |      |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| No.                                              | Item                                                                                                                                  | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard deviation |
| 19.                                              | I will think about leaving my position at the university if I become a victim of workplace bullying                                   | 255 | 1       | 4       | 2.68 | 1.139              |
| 20.                                              | I will think about leaving my position at the university if I am being bullied and there is nothing being done to protect me          | 256 | 1       | 4       | 2.94 | 1.111              |
| 21.                                              | If I witness workplace bullying as a bystander, I will report it                                                                      | 247 | 1       | 4       | 3.06 | 0.996              |
| 22.                                              | The institution (university) I work for actively creates awareness about workplace bullying (e.g. posters, seminars, workshops, etc.) | 245 | 1       | 4       | 2.12 | 1.039              |
| 23.                                              | The section at the institution (university) I work for has been successful in combatting workplace bullying                           | 217 | 1       | 4       | 2.25 | 1.168              |

From Table 4.12 it is evident that the mean for the items in the scale ranged between 1.99 and 3.07, indicating that, on average, the respondents' answers ranged between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3). The following items obtained the highest mean scores: items 8 (If someone files a formal complaint about physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously;  $M = 3.07$ ), 21 (If I witness workplace bullying as a bystander, I will report it;  $M = 3.06$ ), 12 (The institution (university) I work for has support systems (e.g. counselling) in place to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying);  $M = 3.02$ ), 20 (I will think about leaving my position at the university if I am being bullied and there is nothing being done to protect me;  $M = 2.94$ ) and 3 (The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing the occurrence of physical aggression;  $M = 2.91$ ).

The following items obtained the lowest mean scores: items 15 (I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to the human resource department without fear of recourse;  $M = 1.99$ ), 22 (The institution (university) I work for actively creates awareness about workplace bullying (e.g. posters, seminars, workshops, etc.;  $M = 2.12$ ), 23 (The section at the institution (university) I work for has been successful in combatting workplace bullying;  $M = 2.25$ ), 18 (I will feel protected by management should I become a victim of workplace

bullying; M = 2.27) and 16 (I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to my manager without fear of recourse; M = 2.31).

The standard deviation of all the items in the scale ranged between 0.989 (The institution (university) I work for has support systems (e.g. counselling) in place to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying)) and 1.237 (I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to my manager without fear of recourse).

#### 4.3.3.2 Exploratory factor analysis of policies and practices

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 23 Likert-type scale items measuring the perceptions of the respondents on policies and practices in place to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution (Section C of the questionnaire). Principal component analysis and oblimin rotation were used. Table 4.13 presents the results of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

**Table 4.13: KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity**

| KMO and Bartlett's test          |                    |          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| KMO measure of sampling adequacy |                    | 0.877    |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity    | Approx. chi-square | 3376.293 |
|                                  | df                 | 253      |
|                                  | Sig.               | 0.000    |

The KMO test yielded a value of 0.877 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity a value smaller than 0.05, indicating that the correlation between items was sufficient for factor analysis (see Eiselen & Uys, 2016:111; Field, 2005). Table 4.14 presents the total variance explained of policies and practices in place to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution.

**Table 4.14: Total variance explained**

| Component | Initial eigenvalues |               |        | Extraction sums of squared loadings |               |              | Rotation sums of squared loadings <sup>a</sup> |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------|
|           | Total               | % of variance | Total  | Total                               | % of variance | Cumulative % | Total                                          |
| 1         | 11.143              | 48.449        | 48.449 | 11.143                              | 48.449        | 48.449       | 9.204                                          |
| 2         | 2.132               | 9.270         | 57.718 | 2.132                               | 9.270         | 57.718       | 3.307                                          |
| 3         | 1.573               | 6.841         | 64.559 | 1.573                               | 6.841         | 64.559       | 2.077                                          |
| 4         | 1.307               | 5.680         | 70.240 | 1.307                               | 5.680         | 70.240       | 7.185                                          |
| 5         | 1.123               | 4.884         | 75.123 | 1.123                               | 4.884         | 75.123       | 5.925                                          |
| 6         | 0.825               | 3.588         | 78.711 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 7         | 0.758               | 3.294         | 82.005 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 8         | 0.626               | 2.720         | 84.724 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 9         | 0.496               | 2.158         | 86.882 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 10        | 0.441               | 1.920         | 88.802 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 11        | 0.416               | 1.808         | 90.610 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 12        | 0.339               | 1.473         | 92.083 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 13        | 0.300               | 1.304         | 93.388 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 14        | 0.247               | 1.074         | 94.461 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 15        | 0.220               | 0.956         | 95.418 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 16        | 0.207               | 0.902         | 96.319 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 17        | 0.181               | 0.787         | 97.106 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 18        | 0.164               | 0.713         | 97.819 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 19        | 0.130               | 0.565         | 98.384 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 20        | 0.126               | 0.549         | 98.933 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 21        | 0.105               | 0.458         | 99.391 |                                     |               |              |                                                |
| 22        | 0.074               | 0.324         | 99.715 |                                     |               |              |                                                |

**Table 4.14: Total variance explained**

| Component | Initial eigenvalues |       |         | Extraction sums of squared loadings |  |  | Rotation sums of squared loadings <sup>a</sup> |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|---------|-------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------------------|
| 23        | 0.066               | 0.285 | 100.000 |                                     |  |  |                                                |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

Table 4.14 shows that the five factors explained 75.123% of the variance in the policies and practices scale. Table 4.15 presents the pattern matrix of policies and practices.

**Table 4.15: Pattern matrix<sup>a</sup>**

| Policies and practices |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                   |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                        | Item                                                                                                                                                                         | Factor 1                          | Factor 2                                                | Factor 3              | Factor 4                           | Factor 5           |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                              | Effective policies and procedures | Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Quitting job thoughts | Institutional supporting practices | Leadership support |
| Q5                     | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a physically aggressive or threatening manner at the institution I work for | 1.010                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q3                     | The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing the occurrence of physical aggression                                      | 0.861                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q6                     | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a hostile manner at the institution I work for                              | 0.828                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q8                     | If someone files a formal complaint about physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously                                       | 0.776                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q7                     | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a verbally aggressive manner at the institution I work for                  | 0.735                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |

| Policies and practices |                                                                                                                                                                             |                                   |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                        | Item                                                                                                                                                                        | Factor<br>1                       | Factor<br>2                                             | Factor<br>3           | Factor<br>4                        | Factor<br>5        |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                             | Effective policies and procedures | Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Quitting job thoughts | Institutional supporting practices | Leadership support |
| Q9                     | If someone files a formal complaint about non-physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously                                  | 0.632                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q4                     | The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing non-physical (verbal or psychological) aggression from occurring          | 0.588                             |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q2                     | The institution (university) I work for has a zero-tolerance policy statement on workplace bullying                                                                         | 0.525                             |                                                         |                       | 0.370                              |                    |
| Q11                    | I believe that people can get away with being hostile towards colleagues at the institution (university) I work for                                                         |                                   | 0.952                                                   |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q10                    | I believe that people can get away with being aggressive towards colleagues at the institution (university) I work for                                                      |                                   | 0.918                                                   |                       |                                    |                    |
| Q20                    | I will think about leaving my position at the university if I am being bullied and there is nothing being done to protect me                                                |                                   |                                                         | 0.953                 |                                    |                    |
| Q19                    | I will think about leaving my position at the university if I become a victim of workplace bullying                                                                         |                                   |                                                         | 0.927                 |                                    |                    |
| Q13                    | Life-skills training are offered to assist employees in dealing with inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) at the institution (university) I work for |                                   |                                                         |                       | 0.816                              |                    |
| Q14                    | I know what procedures to follow to lodge a complaint of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) at the institution (university) I work for             |                                   |                                                         |                       | 0.731                              |                    |
| Q22                    | The institution (university) I work for actively creates awareness about workplace bullying (e.g. posters, seminars, workshops, etc.)                                       |                                   |                                                         |                       | 0.702                              |                    |

| Policies and practices |                                                                                                                                                                          |                                   |                                                         |                       |                                    |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                        | Item                                                                                                                                                                     | Factor 1                          | Factor 2                                                | Factor 3              | Factor 4                           | Factor 5           |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                          | Effective policies and procedures | Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Quitting job thoughts | Institutional supporting practices | Leadership support |
| Q12                    | The institution (university) I work for has support systems (e.g. counselling) in place to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) | 0.385                             |                                                         |                       | 0.539                              |                    |
| Q1                     | The institution (university) I work for has a policy in place to regulate inappropriate workplace behaviour such as workplace bullying                                   | 0.412                             |                                                         |                       | 0.457                              |                    |
| Q21                    | If I witness workplace bullying as a bystander, I will report it                                                                                                         |                                   |                                                         |                       |                                    | 0.790              |
| Q16                    | I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to my manager without fear of recourse                                          |                                   |                                                         |                       |                                    | 0.686              |
| Q17                    | The leadership in my working environment is capable of addressing workplace bullying                                                                                     |                                   |                                                         |                       | 0.299                              | 0.546              |
| Q15                    | I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to the human resource department without fear of recourse                       |                                   |                                                         |                       | 0.427                              | 0.546              |
| Q18                    | I will feel protected by management should I become a victim of workplace bullying                                                                                       |                                   |                                                         |                       |                                    | 0.467              |
| Q23                    | The section at the institution (university) I work for has been successful in combatting workplace bullying                                                              |                                   |                                                         |                       | 0.421                              | 0.463              |
|                        | Cronbach's alpha                                                                                                                                                         | 0.944                             | 0.905                                                   | 0.865                 | 0.902                              | 0.906              |
|                        | Factor mean                                                                                                                                                              | 2.693                             | 2.668                                                   | 1.709                 | 2.565                              | 2.390              |
|                        | Standard deviation                                                                                                                                                       | 0.943                             | 0.729                                                   | 0.842                 | 0.876                              | 0.955              |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation

a. Rotation converged in 13 iterations

Table 4.15 indicates that five factors, namely *Effective policies and procedures*, *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour*, *Quitting job thoughts*, *Institutional supporting practices* and *Leadership support*, were extracted through Kaiser's criteria (see Field, 2005) that explained 75.12% of the total variance.

**Factor 1: Effective policies and procedures.** Seven items (Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9) loaded on Factor 1: *Effective policies and procedures*, ranging from 0.588 to 1.010. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.944, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 2.69, indicating that, on average, the respondents' answers ranged between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3) for *Effective policies and procedures*. Therefore, it can be deduced that respondents were, on average, satisfied with the effectiveness of the policies and procedures implemented to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution. The standard deviation was 0.943.

**Factor 2: Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour.** Two items (Q10, Q11) loaded on Factor 2: *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour*, ranging from 0.918 to 0.952. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.905, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 2.66, showing that, on average, the respondents' answers ranged between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3). This indicates that the majority of the respondents held the opinion that people can get away with being hostile and aggressive towards colleagues at the institution (university). The standard deviation was 0.729.

**Factor 3: Quitting job thoughts.** Two items (Q19, Q20) loaded on Factor 3: *Quitting job thoughts*, ranging from 0.927 to 0.953. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.865, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 1.70, which indicates that they would think "To some extent" (2) about leaving their positions at the university if being bullied and there is nothing being done to protect them and if they become a victim of workplace bullying. The standard deviation was 0.842.

**Factor 4: Institutional supporting practices.** Six items (Q1, Q2, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q22) loaded on Factor 4: *Institutional supporting practices*, ranging from 0.370 to 0.816. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.902, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 2.56, which indicates that respondents were between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3) satisfied with the supporting practices offered at the institution to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour. The standard deviation was 0.876.

**Factor 5: Leadership support.** Six items (Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q21, Q23) loaded on Factor 5: *Leadership support*, ranging from 0.463 to 0.790. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.906, which is above the required 0.7 and shows high reliability and internal consistency (DeVellis, cited by Pallant, 2016:101). The factor mean measured 2.39, which indicates that respondents reported that they were between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3) satisfied with the leadership support offered at the university in terms of reporting of incidents and addressing of and combatting workplace bullying. The standard deviation was 0.955.

Table 4.16 presents the reliability statistics and Table 4.17 the descriptive statistics of policies and practices, which were discussed above.

**Table 4.16: Reliability statistics of policies and practices**

| Reliability statistics                                  |                  |                                              |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Factor                                                  | Cronbach's alpha | Cronbach's alpha based on standardised Items | Number of items |
| Effective policies and procedures                       | 0.944            | 0.944                                        | 7               |
| Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | 0.905            | 0.906                                        | 2               |
| Quitting job thoughts                                   | 0.865            | 0.865                                        | 2               |
| Institutional supporting practices                      | 0.902            | 0.903                                        | 6               |
| Leadership support                                      | 0.906            | 0.900                                        | 6               |

**Table 4.17: Descriptive statistics of policies and practices**

| Descriptive statistics                                  |     |         |         |        |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
|                                                         | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. deviation |
| Effective policies and procedures                       | 271 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.6931 | 0.94280        |
| Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | 265 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.6679 | 0.72894        |
| Quitting job thoughts                                   | 280 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 1.7089 | 0.84248        |
| Institutional supporting practices                      | 272 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.5646 | 0.87560        |
| Leadership support                                      | 279 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.3902 | 0.95490        |

#### **4.3.4      *Effect of nominal biographical variables on workplace bullying and policies and practices***

The researcher used independent sample t-tests, ANOVA tests and effect sizes to measure the effect of gender, nature of employment, nature of employment contract, nature of campus and marital status on workplace bullying and policies and practices. Independent sample t-tests are used to compare the mean scores of two independent groups on a continuous variable (Eiselen & Uys, 2016: 74; Pallant, 2016:244). ANOVA tests are used to determine the significant difference between more than two group means on a continuous variable (Kerr *et al.*, 2002:79). Effect sizes are used to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables (Mvorganizing, 2021).

##### **4.3.4.1      Effect of gender on workplace bullying and policies and practices**

An independent sample t-test was used to test the association between gender and workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.18 presents the results of the independent sample t-tests.

**Table 4.18: Effect of gender on workplace bullying and policies and practices**

| Group statistics                                        |        |     |      |                    | Independent sample t-test |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Gender                                                  |        | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value                   | Effect size |
| Effective policies and procedures                       | Male   | 84  | 2.81 | 0.91               | 0.160                     | 0.18        |
|                                                         | Female | 186 | 2.63 | 0.95               |                           |             |
| Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Male   | 82  | 2.74 | 0.71               | 0.224                     | 0.16        |
|                                                         | Female | 182 | 2.63 | 0.73               |                           |             |
| Quitting job thoughts                                   | Male   | 85  | 1.75 | 0.77               | 0.587                     | 0.07        |
|                                                         | Female | 194 | 1.69 | 0.88               |                           |             |
| Institutional supporting practices                      | Male   | 81  | 2.72 | 0.83               | 0.054                     | 0.25        |
|                                                         | Female | 190 | 2.50 | 0.89               |                           |             |
| Leadership support                                      | Male   | 85  | 2.54 | 0.94               | 0.077                     | 0.23        |
|                                                         | Female | 193 | 2.32 | 0.95               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Exclusion                                           | Male   | 87  | 1.98 | 0.89               | 0.689                     | 0.05        |
|                                                         | Female | 194 | 1.94 | 0.89               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Hostility                                           | Male   | 87  | 1.29 | 0.59               | 0.173                     | 0.16        |
|                                                         | Female | 194 | 1.20 | 0.37               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Managerial misconduct                               | Male   | 85  | 1.84 | 0.84               | 0.597                     | 0.07        |
|                                                         | Female | 194 | 1.78 | 0.82               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement                        | Male   | 87  | 1.66 | 0.72               | 0.897                     | 0.02        |
|                                                         | Female | 194 | 1.67 | 0.78               |                           |             |

d = 0.2: small effect size; d = 0.5: medium effect size; d = 0.8: large effect size

The results of the t-test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male and female respondents for all the factors of workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*); all

the p-values measured above 0.05 for the four factors (see Pallant, 2016:247). However, the effect size showed a small effect for *Institutional supporting practices* ( $d = 0.25$ ). Thus, the male respondents were more positive about the supporting practices offered at the institution to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour than the female respondents. Furthermore, the effect size of *Leadership support* measured  $d = 0.23$ , indicating a small effect. Therefore, the male respondents ( $M = 2.54$ ) were slightly more positive about leadership support ( $M = 2.32$ ) than the female respondents. The effect sizes of all the other factors measured below 0.2, indicating that the difference between the mean scores of the male and female respondents was negligible (see McLeod, 2019).

#### 4.3.4.2 Effect of nature of employment on workplace bullying and policies and practices

An independent sample t-test was used to test the effect of nature of employment (academic or support) on workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and on policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.19 presents the results of the independent sample t-tests.

**Table 4.19: Effect of nature of employment on workplace bullying and policies and practices**

| Group statistics                                               |          |     |      |                    | Independent sample t-test | Effect size |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Nature of employment                                           |          | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value                   |             |
| <b>Effective policies and procedures</b>                       | Academic | 134 | 2.71 | 0.96               | 0.744                     | 0.04        |
|                                                                | Support  | 130 | 2.68 | 0.93               |                           |             |
| <b>Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour</b> | Academic | 127 | 2.70 | 0.70               | 0.494                     | 0.08        |
|                                                                | Support  | 130 | 2.63 | 0.76               |                           |             |

| Group statistics                   |          |     |      |                    | Independent sample t-test |             |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Nature of employment               |          | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value                   | Effect size |
| Quitting job thoughts              | Academic | 136 | 1.63 | 0.86               | 0.115                     | 0.19        |
|                                    | Support  | 136 | 1.79 | 0.82               |                           |             |
| Institutional supporting practices | Academic | 133 | 2.59 | 0.88               | 0.691                     | 0.05        |
|                                    | Support  | 132 | 2.54 | 0.88               |                           |             |
| Leadership support                 | Academic | 136 | 2.44 | 0.95               | 0.532                     | 0.08        |
|                                    | Support  | 135 | 2.37 | 0.96               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Exclusion                      | Academic | 138 | 1.81 | 0.76               | 0.011                     | 0.28        |
|                                    | Support  | 136 | 2.08 | 0.98               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Hostility                      | Academic | 138 | 1.20 | 0.50               | 0.309                     | 0.11        |
|                                    | Support  | 136 | 1.26 | 0.41               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Management misconduct          | Academic | 136 | 1.83 | 0.87               | 0.488                     | 0.08        |
|                                    | Support  | 136 | 1.76 | 0.79               |                           |             |
| NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement   | Academic | 138 | 1.55 | 0.68               | 0.014                     | 0.28        |
|                                    | Support  | 136 | 1.77 | 0.81               |                           |             |

d = 0.2: small effect size; d = 0.5: medium effect size; d = 0.8: large effect size

The results of the t-test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of academic and support staff respondents for two factors of workplace bullying, namely *Hostility* (p-value = 0.31) and *Management misconduct* (p-value = 0.49); the p-values measured above 0.05. However, the p-values for *Exclusion* (p-value = 0.011) and *Humiliation and belittlement* (p-value = 0.014) measured below 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of academic and support staff respondents. In both instances, the effect size measured 0.28, indicating a small effect. It can be deduced that the support staff respondents (*Exclusion*: M = 2.08; *Humiliation and belittlement*: M = 1.77) were more subjected to exclusion and humiliation and belittlement than the academic staff respondents (*Exclusion*: M = 1.81; *Humiliation and belittlement*: M = 1.55).

Furthermore, the results of the t-test showed no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of academic and support staff respondents for all the policies and practices factors; in all instances, the p-values measured above 0.05. All the effect sizes measured below 0.2, indicating that the difference between the mean scores of the two variables on the factor was negligible.

#### 4.3.4.3 Effect of nature of employment contract on workplace bullying and policies and practices

An independent sample t-test was used to test the effect of nature of employment contract on workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.20 presents the results of the independent sample t-tests.

**Table 4.20: Effect of nature of employment contract on workplace bullying and policies and practices**

| Group statistics                                               |                                               |     |      |                    | Independent sample t-test |             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Nature of employment contract                                  |                                               | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value                   | Effect size |
| <b>Effective policies and procedures</b>                       | Full-time (permanent)                         | 240 | 2.69 | 0.95               | 0.938                     | 0.02        |
|                                                                | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 29  | 2.67 | 0.92               |                           |             |
| <b>Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour</b> | Full-time (permanent)                         | 236 | 2.68 | 0.74               | 0.336                     | 0.19        |
|                                                                | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 27  | 2.54 | 0.62               |                           |             |

| Group statistics                          |                                               |     |      |                    | Independent sample t-test |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Nature of employment contract             |                                               | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value                   | Effect size |
| <b>Quitting job thoughts</b>              | Full-time (permanent)                         | 248 | 1.71 | 0.83               | 0.946                     | 0.01        |
|                                           | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 30  | 1.72 | 0.93               |                           |             |
| <b>Institutional supporting practices</b> | Full-time (permanent)                         | 241 | 2.57 | 0.87               | 0.786                     | 0.05        |
|                                           | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 29  | 2.52 | 0.92               |                           |             |
| <b>Leadership support</b>                 | Full-time (permanent)                         | 247 | 2.39 | 0.96               | 0.982                     | 0.00        |
|                                           | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 30  | 2.39 | 0.90               |                           |             |
| <b>NAQ_Exclusion</b>                      | Full-time (permanent)                         | 248 | 1.92 | 0.85               | 0.357                     | 0.17        |
|                                           | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 32  | 2.11 | 1.09               |                           |             |
| <b>NAQ_Hostility</b>                      | Full-time (permanent)                         | 248 | 1.21 | 0.40               | 0.687                     | 0.07        |
|                                           | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 32  | 1.24 | 0.41               |                           |             |
| <b>NAQ_Management misconduct</b>          | Full-time (permanent)                         | 248 | 1.80 | 0.82               | 0.492                     | 0.13        |
|                                           | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 30  | 1.69 | 0.78               |                           |             |

| Group statistics                        |                                               |     |      |                    | Independent sample t-test | Effect size |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Nature of employment contract           |                                               | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value                   |             |
| <b>NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement</b> | Full-time (permanent)                         | 248 | 1.65 | 0.73               | 0.858                     | 0.03        |
|                                         | Fixed term/Temporary/ Postdoctoral fellowship | 32  | 1.68 | 0.88               |                           |             |

d = 0.2: small effect size; d = 0.5: medium effect size; d = 0.8: large effect size

The results of the t-test showed no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of full-time (permanent) and fixed-term/temporary/postdoctoral fellowship respondents for all the factors of workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*); all the p-values measured above 0.05. Furthermore, all the effect sizes measured below 0.2, indicating that the difference between the mean scores of the two variables on the factors was negligible.

#### 4.3.4.4 Effect of nature of campus on workplace bullying and policies and practices

An ANOVA test was used to determine the effect of nature of campus on workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.21 presents the results of the ANOVA test.

**Table 4.21: Effect of campus on workplace bullying and policies and practices**

| Group statistics                                               |       |     |      |                    | ANOVA   | Effect sizes   |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|------|--------------------|---------|----------------|----------|
| Campus                                                         |       | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value | A with B and C | B with C |
| <b>Effective policies and procedures</b>                       | A     | 198 | 2.70 | 0.93               | 0.903   |                |          |
|                                                                | B     | 44  | 2.64 | 0.99               |         | 0.06           |          |
|                                                                | C     | 29  | 2.74 | 1.02               |         | 0.04           | 0.10     |
|                                                                | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| <b>Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour</b> | A     | 271 | 2.69 | 0.94               | 0.195   |                |          |
|                                                                | B     | 192 | 2.65 | 0.72               |         | 0.04           |          |
|                                                                | C     | 44  | 2.61 | 0.68               |         | 0.30           | 0.33     |
|                                                                | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| <b>Quitting job thoughts</b>                                   | A     | 29  | 2.90 | 0.85               | 0.688   |                |          |
|                                                                | B     | 265 | 2.67 | 0.73               |         | 0.01           |          |
|                                                                | C     | 205 | 1.72 | 0.84               |         | 0.17           | 0.16     |
|                                                                | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| <b>Institutional supporting practices</b>                      | A     | 45  | 1.73 | 0.96               | 0.155   |                |          |
|                                                                | B     | 30  | 1.58 | 0.68               |         | 0.13           |          |
|                                                                | C     | 280 | 1.71 | 0.84               |         | 0.29           | 0.41     |
|                                                                | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| <b>Leadership support</b>                                      | A     | 199 | 2.55 | 0.86               | 0.665   |                |          |
|                                                                | B     | 45  | 2.44 | 0.86               |         | 0.04           |          |
|                                                                | C     | 28  | 2.84 | 0.98               |         | 0.16           | 0.13     |
|                                                                | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |

| Group statistics                 |       |     |      |                    | ANOVA   | Effect sizes   |          |
|----------------------------------|-------|-----|------|--------------------|---------|----------------|----------|
| Campus                           |       | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value | A with B and C | B with C |
| NAQ_Exclusion                    | A     | 272 | 2.56 | 0.88               | 0.432   |                |          |
|                                  | B     | 204 | 2.37 | 0.94               |         | 0.19           |          |
|                                  | C     | 45  | 2.40 | 1.00               |         | 0.13           | 0.07     |
|                                  | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| NAQ_Hostility                    | A     | 30  | 2.53 | 1.03               | 0.053   |                |          |
|                                  | B     | 279 | 2.39 | 0.95               |         | 0.16           |          |
|                                  | C     | 205 | 1.99 | 0.91               |         | 0.22           | 0.30     |
|                                  | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| NAQ_Management misconduct        | A     | 45  | 1.81 | 0.80               | 0.932   |                |          |
|                                  | B     | 32  | 1.88 | 0.87               |         | 0.05           |          |
|                                  | C     | 282 | 1.95 | 0.89               |         | 0.06           | 0.01     |
|                                  | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |
| NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement | A     | 205 | 1.22 | 0.39               | 0.543   |                |          |
|                                  | B     | 45  | 1.16 | 0.35               |         | 0.18           |          |
|                                  | C     | 32  | 1.40 | 0.81               |         | 0.08           | 0.09     |
|                                  | Total |     |      |                    |         |                |          |

d = 0.2: small effect size; d = 0.5: medium effect size; d = 0.8: large effect size

The results of the ANOVA test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the different campuses of the university (A, B and C) for all the workplace bullying factors (*Exclusion, Management misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and for all the policies and practices factors (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*); all the p-values measured above 0.05. The effect size showed a small to medium effect for the difference between B and C in terms of *Hostility* (d = 0.30; Campus

B:  $M = 2.39$ ; Campus C: 1.99), indicating that respondents of Campus B were more subjected to hostility than respondents of Campus C.

The effect sizes also showed a small to medium effect for the differences between campuses in terms of *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour* ( $d = 0.33$ ; Campus B:  $M = 2.65$ ; Campus C: 2.61) and *Institutional supporting practices* ( $d = 0.41$ ; Campus B:  $M = 1.58$ ; Campus C: 1.71). Therefore, the respondents of Campus B agreed more than the respondents of Campus C that people can get away with being hostile and aggressive towards colleagues at the university. Furthermore, the respondents of Campus C were more positive about the institutional supporting practices offered at the university than the respondents of Campus B.

#### 4.3.4.5 Effect of marital status on workplace bullying and policies and practices

An ANOVA test was used to determine the effect of marital status on workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.22 presents the results of the ANOVA test.

**Table 4.22: Effect of marital status on workplace bullying and policies and practices**

| Group statistics                         |                                                        |     |      |                    | ANOVA   | Effect sizes          |                        |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Marital status                           |                                                        | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value | Single with Unmarried | Unmarried with Married |
| <b>Effective policies and procedures</b> | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/Divorced/Separated | 65  | 2.47 | 0.91               | 0.062   |                       |                        |
|                                          | Unmarried, in relationship                             | 36  | 2.71 | 0.91               |         | 0.26                  |                        |
|                                          | Married                                                | 166 | 2.79 | 0.95               |         | 0.34                  | 0.09                   |
|                                          | Total                                                  | 267 | 2.70 | 0.94               |         |                       |                        |

| Group statistics                                               |                                                         |     |      |                    | ANOVA   | Effect sizes          |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Marital status                                                 |                                                         | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value | Single with Unmarried | Unmarried with Married |
| <b>Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour</b> | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated | 64  | 2.66 | 0.68               | 0.959   |                       |                        |
|                                                                | Unmarried, in relationship                              | 35  | 2.70 | 0.81               |         | 0.05                  |                        |
|                                                                | Married                                                 | 163 | 2.67 | 0.74               |         | 0.01                  | 0.04                   |
|                                                                | Total                                                   | 262 | 2.67 | 0.73               |         |                       |                        |
| <b>Quitting job thoughts</b>                                   | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated | 66  | 1.70 | 0.76               | 0.480   |                       |                        |
|                                                                | Unmarried, in relationship                              | 36  | 1.88 | 0.81               |         | 0.22                  |                        |
|                                                                | Married                                                 | 174 | 1.69 | 0.88               |         | 0.01                  | 0.21                   |
|                                                                | Total                                                   | 276 | 1.72 | 0.85               |         |                       |                        |
| <b>Institutional supporting practices</b>                      | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated | 66  | 2.44 | 0.89               | 0.280   |                       |                        |
|                                                                | Unmarried, in relationship                              | 36  | 2.71 | 0.85               |         | 0.31                  |                        |
|                                                                | Married                                                 | 166 | 2.60 | 0.88               |         | 0.17                  | 0.14                   |
|                                                                | Total                                                   | 268 | 2.57 | 0.88               |         |                       |                        |
| <b>Leadership support</b>                                      | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated | 66  | 2.24 | 0.83               | 0.256   |                       |                        |
|                                                                | Unmarried, in relationship                              | 36  | 2.40 | 0.98               |         | 0.17                  |                        |
|                                                                | Married                                                 | 173 | 2.46 | 0.99               |         | 0.23                  | 0.07                   |
|                                                                | Total                                                   | 275 | 2.40 | 0.96               |         |                       |                        |

| Group statistics                        |                                                          |     |      |                    | ANOVA   | Effect sizes          |                        |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Marital status                          |                                                          | N   | Mean | Standard deviation | P-value | Single with Unmarried | Unmarried with Married |
| <b>NAQ_Exclusion</b>                    | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated  | 66  | 2.00 | 0.86               | 0.368   |                       |                        |
|                                         | Unmarried, in relationship                               | 38  | 2.10 | 0.91               |         | 0.11                  |                        |
|                                         | Married                                                  | 174 | 1.89 | 0.90               |         | 0.12                  | 0.23                   |
|                                         | Total                                                    | 278 | 1.95 | 0.89               |         |                       |                        |
| <b>NAQ_Hostility</b>                    | Single, not in relationship/ Widowed/ Divorced/Separated | 66  | 1.30 | 0.49               | 0.380   |                       |                        |
|                                         | Unmarried, in relationship                               | 38  | 1.21 | 0.34               |         | 0.17                  |                        |
|                                         | Married                                                  | 174 | 1.21 | 0.46               |         | 0.18                  | 0.01                   |
|                                         | Total                                                    | 278 | 1.23 | 0.45               |         |                       |                        |
| <b>NAQ_Management misconduct</b>        | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated  | 66  | 1.73 | 0.75               | 0.613   |                       |                        |
|                                         | Unmarried, in relationship                               | 36  | 1.90 | 0.72               |         | 0.23                  |                        |
|                                         | Married                                                  | 174 | 1.80 | 0.88               |         | 0.09                  | 0.11                   |
|                                         | Total                                                    | 276 | 1.80 | 0.83               |         |                       |                        |
| <b>NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement</b> | Single, not in relationship/Widowed/ Divorced/Separated  | 66  | 1.75 | 0.72               | 0.477   |                       |                        |
|                                         | Unmarried, in relationship                               | 38  | 1.72 | 0.80               |         | 0.04                  |                        |
|                                         | Married                                                  | 174 | 1.62 | 0.78               |         | 0.16                  | 0.12                   |
|                                         | Total                                                    | 278 | 1.66 | 0.77               |         |                       |                        |

d = 0.2: small effect size; d = 0.5: medium effect size; d = 0.8: large effect size

The results of the ANOVA test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the different marital categories for all the factors of workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*); in all instances, the p-values measured above 0.05.

The effect sizes showed a small to medium effect for two of the marital categories in terms of *Effective policies and procedures*, where respondents who were single, not in a relationship/widowed/divorced/separated ( $M = 2.47$ ) were less positive about the effectiveness of the policies and procedures than respondents who were unmarried, but in a relationship ( $d = 0.26$ ;  $M = 2.71$ ) and those who were married ( $d = 0.34$ ;  $M = 2.79$ ).

The effect sizes showed a small effect for three of the marital categories in terms of *Quitting job thoughts*, where respondents who were single, not in a relationship/widowed/divorced/separated ( $d = 0.22$ ;  $M = 1.70$ ) and married ( $d = 0.21$ ;  $M = 1.69$ ) agreed less than respondents who were unmarried, but in a relationship ( $M = 1.88$ ) that they would consider leaving their jobs at the university if bullying behaviour was not dealt with appropriately.

The effect size showed a small effect for two of the marital categories in terms of *Institutional supporting practices* ( $d = 0.31$ , Single, not in a relationship/Widowed/Divorced/Separated:  $M = 2.44$ , Unmarried, in relationship:  $2.71$ ). Therefore, the single, not in a relationship/widowed/divorced/separated respondents were less positive about institutional supporting practices offered by the university than respondents who were in a relationship, but not married.

The effect size showed a small effect for two of the marital categories in terms of *Leadership support* ( $d = 0.23$ , Single, not in a relationship/Widowed/Divorced/Separated:  $M = 2.24$ , Married:  $2.46$ ). Therefore, the single, not in a relationship/widowed/divorced/separated respondents were less satisfied with the leadership support offered at the university in terms of reporting of incidents and addressing of and combatting workplace bullying, than respondents who were married.

The effect size showed a small effect for two of the marital categories in terms of *Exclusion* ( $d = 0.23$ , Unmarried, in a relationship:  $M = 2.10$ , Married:  $1.89$ ). Therefore, the married respondents

indicated that they had experienced or was subjected to exclusion less often than the respondents who were in a relationship, but who were unmarried.

The effect size showed a small effect for two of the marital categories in terms of *Managerial misconduct* ( $d = 0.23$ , Single, not in a relationship/Widowed/Divorced/Separated:  $M = 1.73$ , Unmarried, in a relationship:  $1.90$ ). Therefore, respondents who were unmarried but in a relationship indicated that they had experienced or was subjected to managerial misconduct more often than the respondents who were single, not in a relationship/widowed/divorced/separated.

#### **4.3.5 Correlations between ordinal biographical variables and workplace bullying and policies and practices**

A correlation (Spearman's rank-order correlation) test was used to determine the correlation between ordinal biographical variables and workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.23 presents the results of the correlation (Spearman's rank-order correlation) test between ordinal biographical variables and workplace bullying and policies and practices.

**Table 4.23: Correlation between age, highest qualification and years working at the university with workplace bullying and policies and practices**

|                                   |                         | Age    | Highest qualification | Years working at the university |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Effective policies and procedures | Correlation coefficient | 0.09   | 0.02                  | -0.030                          |
|                                   | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.12   | 0.80                  | 0.618                           |
|                                   | N                       | 271.00 | 271.00                | 271                             |

|                                                         |                         | Age    | Highest qualification | Years working at the university |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Correlation coefficient | 0.11   | 0.01                  | 0.014                           |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.09   | 0.88                  | 0.826                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 265.00 | 265.00                | 265                             |
| Quitting job thoughts                                   | Correlation coefficient | -0.07  | -0.146*               | 0.117                           |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.26   | 0.01                  | 0.051                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 280.00 | 280.00                | 280                             |
| Institutional supporting practices                      | Correlation coefficient | 0.141* | -0.02                 | -0.052                          |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.02   | 0.70                  | 0.395                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 272.00 | 272.00                | 272                             |
| Leadership support                                      | Correlation coefficient | 0.09   | -0.02                 | -0.079                          |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.12   | 0.78                  | 0.188                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 279.00 | 279.00                | 279                             |
| NAQ_Exclusion                                           | Correlation coefficient | -0.06  | -0.10                 | 0.077                           |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.31   | 0.09                  | 0.198                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 282.00 | 282.00                | 282                             |
| NAQ_Hostility                                           | Correlation coefficient | -0.02  | -0.146*               | 0.076                           |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.77   | 0.01                  | 0.204                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 282.00 | 282.00                | 282                             |
| NAQ_Management misconduct                               | Correlation coefficient | -0.09  | 0.03                  | 0.147*                          |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.11   | 0.61                  | 0.014                           |
|                                                         | N                       | 280.00 | 280.00                | 280                             |

|                                  |                         | Age    | Highest qualification | Years working at the university |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement | Correlation coefficient | -0.02  | -0.135*               | 0.124*                          |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.72   | 0.02                  | 0.038                           |
|                                  | N                       | 282.00 | 282.00                | 282                             |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

(a) small effect:  $r = 0.1$ , (b) medium effect:  $r = 0.3$  and (c) large effect:  $r > 0.5$

The Spearman's rank-order correlation test was used to test the correlations between age, highest qualification and years working at the university. The results are discussed below.

**Age.** A small positive correlation was found between the age of the respondents and *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.02;  $r = 0.141$ ). This indicates that the older respondents were, the more positive they were regarding the institutional supporting practices offered at the institution.

**Highest level of qualification.** A small negative correlation was found between highest level of qualification and *Quitting job thoughts* (p-value = 0.01;  $r = -0.146$ ). This suggests that the less qualified the respondents were, the more inclined they were to have thoughts of leaving the organisation should workplace bullying occur. Another small negative correlation was found between highest level of qualification and *Hostility* (p-value = 0.01;  $r = -0.146$ ). This indicates that the more qualified the respondents were, the less they were subjected to hostility. Furthermore, a small negative correlation was found between highest level of qualification and *Humiliation and belittlement* (p-value = 0.02;  $r = -0.135$ ). This suggests that the less qualified the respondents were, the more they experienced acts of humiliation and belittlement.

**Years working at the university.** A small positive correlation was found between years working at the university and *Managerial misconduct* (p-value = 0.014;  $r = 0.147$ ). This indicates that the longer the respondents had worked at the university, the more they had been exposed to managerial misconduct. Another small positive correlation was also found between years working at the university and *Humiliation and belittlement* (p-value = 0.038;  $r = 0.124$ ). This suggests that the respondents experienced more humiliation and belittlement at the university the longer they had been working for the institution.

#### **4.3.6      *Correlations between workplace bullying and policies and practices***

A Spearman's rank-order correlation test was used to determine the correlation between workplace bullying factors (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices factors (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*). Table 4.24 presents the results of the Spearman's rank-order correlation test between workplace bullying and policies and practices factors.

Table 4.24: Correlation between workplace bullying and policies and practices

|                                                         |                         | Effective policies and procedures | Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Quitting job thoughts | Institutional supporting practices | Leadership support | NAQ_Exclusion | NAQ_Hostility | NAQ_Management misconduct | NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Effective policies and procedures                       | Correlation coefficient | 1.00                              | 0.438**                                                 | -0.366**              | 0.703**                            | 0.701**            | -0.432**      | -0.249**      | -0.284**                  | -0.447**                         |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         |                                   | 0.00                                                    | 0.000                 | 0.000                              | 0.000              | 0.000         | 0.000         | 0.000                     | 0.000                            |
|                                                         | N                       | 271.00                            | 262.00                                                  | 271                   | 267                                | 271                | 271           | 271           | 271                       | 271                              |
| Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Correlation coefficient | 0.438**                           | 1.00                                                    | -0.085                | 0.364**                            | 0.227**            | -0.069        | 0.058         | -0.055                    | -0.072                           |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              |                                                         | 0.170                 | 0.000                              | 0.000              | 0.264         | 0.344         | 0.373                     | 0.244                            |
|                                                         | N                       | 262.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 265                   | 259                                | 265                | 265           | 265           | 265                       | 265                              |
| Quitting job thoughts                                   | Correlation coefficient | -0.366**                          | -0.08                                                   | 1.000                 | -0.293**                           | -0.467**           | 0.696**       | 0.482**       | 0.760**                   | 0.786**                          |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.17                                                    |                       | 0.000                              | 0.000              | 0.000         | 0.000         | 0.000                     | 0.000                            |
|                                                         | N                       | 271.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 280                   | 272                                | 279                | 280           | 280           | 280                       | 280                              |
| Institutional supporting practices                      | Correlation coefficient | 0.703**                           | 0.364**                                                 | -0.293**              | 1.000                              | 0.660**            | -0.399**      | -0.154*       | -0.244**                  | -0.389**                         |
|                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.00                                                    | 0.000                 |                                    | 0.000              | 0.000         | 0.011         | 0.000                     | 0.000                            |
|                                                         | N                       | 267.00                            | 259.00                                                  | 272                   | 272                                | 272                | 272           | 272           | 272                       | 272                              |

|                           |                         | Effective policies and procedures | Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Quitting job thoughts | Institutional supporting practices | Leadership support | NAQ_Exclusion | NAQ_Hostility | NAQ_Management misconduct | NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Leadership support        | Correlation coefficient | 0.701**                           | 0.227**                                                 | -0.467**              | 0.660**                            | 1.000              | -0.595**      | -0.271**      | -0.418**                  | -0.560**                         |
|                           | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.00                                                    | 0.000                 | 0.000                              |                    | 0.000         | 0.000         | 0.000                     | 0.000                            |
|                           | N                       | 271.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 279                   | 272                                | 279                | 279           | 279           | 279                       | 279                              |
| NAQ_Exclusion             | Correlation coefficient | -0.432**                          | -0.07                                                   | 0.696**               | -0.399**                           | -0.595**           | 1.000         | 0.472**       | 0.621**                   | 0.811**                          |
|                           | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.26                                                    | 0.000                 | 0.000                              | 0.000              |               | 0.000         | 0.000                     | 0.000                            |
|                           | N                       | 271.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 280                   | 272                                | 279                | 282           | 282           | 280                       | 282                              |
| NAQ_Hostility             | Correlation coefficient | -0.249**                          | 0.06                                                    | 0.482**               | -0.154*                            | -0.271**           | 0.472**       | 1.000         | 0.428**                   | 0.585**                          |
|                           | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.34                                                    | 0.000                 | 0.011                              | 0.000              | 0.000         |               | 0.000                     | 0.000                            |
|                           | N                       | 271.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 280                   | 272                                | 279                | 282           | 282           | 280                       | 282                              |
| NAQ_Management misconduct | Correlation coefficient | -0.284**                          | -0.05                                                   | 0.760**               | -0.244**                           | -0.418**           | 0.621**       | 0.428**       | 1.000                     | 0.633**                          |
|                           | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.37                                                    | 0.000                 | 0.000                              | 0.000              | 0.000         | 0.000         |                           | 0.000                            |
|                           | N                       | 271.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 280                   | 272                                | 279                | 280           | 280           | 280                       | 280                              |

|                                  |                         | Effective policies and procedures | Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour | Quitting job thoughts | Institutional supporting practices | Leadership support | NAQ_Exclusion | NAQ_Hostility | NAQ_Management misconduct | NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| NAQ_Humiliation and belittlement | Correlation coefficient | -0.447**                          | -0.07                                                   | 0.786**               | -0.389**                           | -0.560**           | 0.811**       | 0.585**       | 0.633**                   | 1.000                            |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.00                              | 0.24                                                    | 0.000                 | 0.000                              | 0.000              | 0.000         | 0.000         | 0.000                     |                                  |
|                                  | N                       | 271.00                            | 265.00                                                  | 280                   | 272                                | 279                | 282           | 282           | 280                       | 282                              |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

(a) small effect:  $r = 0.1$ , (b) medium effect:  $r = 0.3$  and (c) large effect:  $r > 0.5$

#### 4.3.6.1 Correlations between workplace bullying factors

Medium to large positive correlations between 0.428 and 0.811 were found between the four workplace bullying factors. All p-values measured 0.000.

Medium to large positive correlations were found between *Exclusion* and *Hostility* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.472$ ), *Exclusion* and *Managerial misconduct* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.621$ ) and, *Exclusion* and *Humiliation and belittlement* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.811$ ). This suggests that the more respondents experienced being excluded, the more they were subjected to hostility, managerial misconduct, and humiliation and belittlement.

Medium to large positive correlations were found between *Hostility* and *Managerial misconduct* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.428$ ) and *Hostility* and *Humiliation and belittlement* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.585$ ). This indicates that the more hostile the working environment was perceived to be by the respondents, the more likely they were subjected to managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement at the institution (university) they worked for.

A large positive correlation was found between *Managerial misconduct* and *Humiliation and belittlement* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.633$ ). This suggests that the more the respondents experienced managerial misconduct, the more they were subjected to humiliation and belittlement.

#### 4.3.6.2 Correlations between policies and practices factors

Small to large positive (ranging from 0.227 to 0.703) as well as negative (ranging from -0.293 to -0.467) correlations were found between the five policies and practices factors. The p-values measured between 0.000 and 0.170.

Medium to large positive correlations were found between *Effective policies and procedures* and *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.438$ ), *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.703$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.701$ ). This indicates that the more positive the respondents were about the effectiveness of the policies and procedures, the more they believed that people can get away with being hostile and aggressive towards colleagues at the university and the more positive they were about the institutional supporting practices and leadership support offered at the institution (university).

Small to medium positive correlations were found between *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour* and *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.364$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.227$ ). This shows that the more respondents believed that people can get away with being hostile and aggressive towards colleagues at the institution, the more positive opinions they held regarding institutional supporting practices and leadership support offered by the institution.

Small to medium negative correlations were found between *Quitting job thoughts* and *Effective policies and procedures* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.366$ ), *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.293$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.467$ ). This suggests that the respondents would consider leaving their jobs at the institution (university) if there were little to no effective policies and procedures, institutional support practices and/or leadership support being provided by the institution.

A large positive correlation was found between *Institutional supporting practices* and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.660$ ). This indicates that the more the respondents perceived or experienced institutional supporting practices, the more positive they were about leadership support offered by the institution.

#### 4.3.6.3 Correlations between workplace bullying factors and policies and practices factors

Medium to large negative correlations were found between *Exclusion* and *Effective policies and procedures* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.432$ ), *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.399$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.595$ ). This shows that when the respondents considered the policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support adequate and effective, they tended to feel less excluded.

Small to medium negative correlations were found between *Hostility* and *Effective policies and procedures* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.249$ ), *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.154$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.271$ ). This indicates that when the respondents believed that the policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support were adequate and effective, they tended to perceive the workplace environment as less hostile.

Small to medium negative correlations were found between *Managerial misconduct* and *Effective policies and procedures* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.284$ ), *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.244$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.418$ ). This indicates that when policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support were considered adequate and effective by the respondents, the more respondents perceived that managerial misconduct was less likely to take place.

Medium to large negative correlations were found between *Humiliation and belittlement* and *Effective policies and procedures* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.447$ ), and *Institutional supporting practices* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.389$ ) and *Leadership support* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = -0.560$ ). This indicates that when the policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support were considered adequate and effective by respondents, humiliation and belittlement were less likely to take place.

Medium to large positive correlations were found between *Exclusion* and *Quitting job thoughts* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.696$ ), *Hostility* and *Quitting job thoughts* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.482$ ), *Managerial misconduct* and *Quitting job thoughts* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.760$ ), and *Humiliation and belittlement* and *Quitting job thoughts* (p-value = 0.00;  $r = 0.786$ ). This shows that when the respondents felt subjected to exclusion, hostility, managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement, they would consider leaving their jobs at the institution.

The empirical findings and data analysis of the qualitative data are presented in the next section.

#### **4.4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSES OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

This section presents and discusses the empirical findings and analyses of the qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with keystone individuals at the selected higher education institution to obtain their opinions regarding bullying behaviour and processes in place to counter this behaviour at the institution for which the participants work. To protect the identity of the participants who took part in the research, they are referred to as participants followed by a numerical value (e.g. Participant 1 = P1), thus, their roles and positions are not revealed (see Table 4.25).

**Table 4.25: Interview responses**

| Research participants |                | University campus | Sex    |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|
| P1                    | Participant 1  | Campus A          | Female |
| P2                    | Participant 2  | Campus A          | Female |
| P3                    | Participant 3  | Campus A          | Female |
| P4                    | Participant 4  | Campus A          | Male   |
| P5                    | Participant 5  | Campus B          | Female |
| P6                    | Participant 6  | Campus B          | Male   |
| P7                    | Participant 7  | Campus B          | Female |
| P8                    | Participant 8  | Campus B          | Female |
| P9                    | Participant 9  | Campus B          | Female |
| P10                   | Participant 10 | Campus C          | Male   |

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Data were coded and categories and overarching themes were determined. The themes as they relate to the questions asked in the questionnaires are reflected in Table 4.26; the findings of the study are presented according to the themes.

**Table 4.26: Themes and the relation with the questions asked in the interview schedules (questionnaires)**

| Themes                                                | Interview questionnaire A | Interview questionnaire B |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Theme 1:<br>Experiences of bullying behaviour         | Q1                        |                           |
| Theme 2:<br>Reporting of bullying behaviour           |                           | Q1                        |
| Theme 3:<br>Action taken against bullying incidents   | Q2                        | Q2                        |
| Theme 4:<br>Seriousness of bullying incidents         | Q3                        |                           |
| Theme 5:<br>Anti-bullying policy                      | Q4, Q8                    | Q4, Q8                    |
| Theme 6:<br>Employee awareness of advisory facilities | Q6                        | Q6                        |

| Themes                                                   | Interview questionnaire A | Interview questionnaire B |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Theme 7:<br>Managing workplace bullying                  | Q7                        | Q7                        |
| Theme 8:<br>Prevention measures for workplace bullying   | Q5, Q9                    |                           |
| Theme 9:<br>Intervention measures for workplace bullying | Q5, Q10                   |                           |

\*Question = Q

#### **4.4.1 Experiences of bullying behaviour**

The question related to this theme focused on obtaining the opinions of deans, deputy deans, school directors and a People and Culture representative regarding their experiences of workplace bullying in the institution and/or in their working environments (e.g. departments). All participants responded to the question. Eight of the 10 participants confirmed that they had encountered workplace bullying in their respective working environments. For example, P1 said the following: “Yes I have, in this context, as well as previous places of employment. I have seen, witnessed, managed, luckily not personally experienced, too much workplace bullying.” P5 shared the following: “Yes there are many things currently happening at the institution which I believe is unfair labour practices ... The feeling that I get is on my level, I do not dare raise concern ...” P4 stated that bullying was present at the institution for which the participant worked, and said that, on average, four cases of bullying a month are dealt with.

The data revealed that the following negative actions were often experienced in working environments: impossible workloads (P3, P7 and P2), micro-management (P7, P5 and P2), removing the responsibilities of employees (P4 and P2), shouting (P4), manipulation of employees (P4), falsely accusing other employees (P2), telling employees that they are useless (P4), different treatment according to position and seniority of employees (P4) and withholding of employees' leave (P4).

Furthermore, two of the participants (P3 and P7) indicated that women were often the targets of workplace bullying. Gender-based bullying in the workplace included male colleagues commenting on the wardrobe choices of female colleagues (P7), the disregard of authority held by female colleagues in managerial positions (P3) and name calling (P7). Name calling is defined

as the intentional teasing of an individual or group of individuals by another individual or group with harmful intent (Espelage *et al.*, 2018:5). The following comments were made in this regard:

*P7: Another incident of workplace bullying I recall, especially in a managerial role, was being told by another manager that the work being completed by a black female academic was redundant and divisive and as such black women have no place being in positions in academia. Any rebuttal from my end was then seen as aggressive. 'Angry black woman' is used many times to silence and alienate black women.*

*P3: I personally have not experienced any bullying at this university, although there have been some discussions of actual or perceived acts of bullying. Two issues can be highlighted: one a gender issue where a female manager was not taken seriously and another where there is a perception of academic sabotage by the critical reader(s) of an academic's PG students ...*

P4 indicated that she experienced workplace bullying on a personal level. She also commented on experiencing public bullying of individuals at the institution. Public forms of bullying can include, but are not limited to, actions such as publicly screaming and shouting at an individual, physically hurting an individual in plain sight of others and gossiping about other employees when they are present in the vicinity (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:70). The participant noted in her reply that there was bullying present in her division as well, and that it came from senior management, where she had also been a victim herself.

P4 referred to observing bullying behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic: "During lockdown we had cases where employees were asked to come to work and work from the office, while they could do their work from home."

From the above, it is evident that workplace bullying is prevalent within specific working environments as well as the institution as a whole.

#### **4.4.2      *Reporting of bullying behaviour***

The question related to this theme aimed to determine whether employees of the institution reported or lodged formal complaints of workplace bullying of People and Culture. Different views were obtained from the participants.

One of the participants (P9) responded positively to the question and confirmed that bullying incidents were reported, while another participant (P8) employed at the same site of delivery responded negatively to the question. P8 noted that since his employment at the institution, he had not encountered any bullying, therefore there had been no bullying cases reported. P4, employed at a different site of delivery, said that bullying incidents were being reported up to four times a month. Two of the participants (P10 and P5) said that employees were often too afraid to report workplace bullies and the acts that they had committed. In this regard, P5 noted:

*Yes, there are many things happening currently at the institutions which I believe is unfair labour practice. I raised my concern on many platforms and as a result of this a senior staff member communicated with me in a very defensive and aggressive manner. The feeling I get is that on my level I don't dare to raise my concerns.*

Therefore, it is evident that bullying at the site of delivery was underreported due to fear of recourse. Furthermore, without adequate reporting of bullying, effective actions against bullying cannot be taken.

#### **4.4.3      Action taken against bullying incidents**

The questions related to this theme aimed at investigating the responses to workplace bullying from the point of view of the deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative. Mixed opinions were obtained from the participants.

P9 indicated that bullying had been reported at their site of delivery and that the actions that were taken against workplace bullying were determined by the University Management Committee (led by the director of People and Culture). Therefore, there was an internal process in place that dealt with these types of bullying incidents.

From a managerial perspective, P7 and P2 explained that in their departments there was somewhat of a “do nothing approach” to instances of bullying that were subtler than clear cases of bullying. Acts such as micro-management and impossible workloads were highlighted as subtle acts of bullying that received no attention from management (P2). P2 stated that there were instances where senior management used these practices to obtain more control over their

employees. The participant further said that these practices should be formally identified as workplace bullying. Similarly, P7 shared:

*Some bullying tactics such as social isolation, withholding of information and blocking opportunities are subtle and at times hard to spot. Sometimes there is no name for them, and as such one does not feel like one should do something about it. Some responses are very much about self-improvement, training one to be able to better withstand certain factors, because institutionally, there is no recourse one can take.*

P7 and P10 indicated that there was a lack of a clear definition of workplace bullying and the acts that constitute the phenomenon. P5 said that fear of recourse and victimisation in departments led to managers and employees becoming unwilling to report or confront bullies in their working environments.

The best manner in which to deal with bullying, according to responses from participants P1, P3 and P9, would be to refer bullying cases to the People and Culture. Other responses that were also highlighted included mediation and an informal conversation between the perpetrator and the victim. P1's answer to this question was: "As a line manager I had proper discussions with staff members where I observe potential workplace violence and had a good mediation discussion and if I could not resolve it, I referred it to the wellness department."

Therefore, the possibility for combatting workplace bullying existed in the institution. However, from the above accounts it can be deduced that this is only possible if the correct procedures and policies are in place and followed correctly.

#### **4.4.4      *Seriousness of bullying incidents***

The question related to this theme aimed to determine whether bullying incidents were taken seriously in working environments at the institution. The views of deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative were elicited in this regard.

P8 responded positively and said that all the systems to deal with workplace bullying were in place and available to employees of the institution. Furthermore, the participant said that the higher education institution had manuals and programmes in place to protect employees from harm. P3

said that there were cases where management was effective in dealing with workplace bullying, as noted below:

*P3: Yes, in rare instance where a possible bullying matter, or perceptions thereof, is discussed (for example during a performance management discussion; HR Committee; special meeting), the matter is highlighted and addressed immediately or a process is put in place to ensure that it is addressed through, for example, training.*

Unfortunately, workplace bullying incidents were only taken seriously when it was obvious and clear cases of workplace bullying (P1, P6 and P3). Subtle and unclear forms of bullying were much more difficult to detect, as victims were often too afraid to report them (P1 and P6) due to fear of recourse (P6). Within these relationships between employees and management, there was a clear power play between victims that were being bullied by employees more senior than them, as explained by P6: "... the person who is being bullied is many times too scared to take cases forward after reporting it. As the bully is usually in a power position it seems very difficult to 'punish' the person."

Another example of a subtle act of bullying was given by P7:

*A realistic example is people sending communications in Afrikaans to non-Afrikaans speakers, in an English medium institution. This is usually taken very lightly by colleagues, and there is really nothing nor any way to articulate that this excludes other colleagues. I think institutions think bullying needs to be big and obvious things before taking a stance, the small things really add up.*

The participants seemed to be in agreement that there were subtle acts of bullying taking place and that the support from the organisation was lacking in dealing with these issues. P5 said: "I think our institution preaches an 'ethic of care', which is one of our core values, but in practice it is just lip service."

From the data obtained by the participants it was clear that the institution had procedures in place to counter workplace bullying, but that they were not being implemented or taken seriously enough by the institution. Throughout this theme, "subtle bullying" and "fear of recourse" were mentioned as determining factors for why bullying was considered underreported. Failure to successfully implement procedures and policies focused on eliminating workplace bullying led to

perceptions of the institution being unable to protect their employees. Increasing the staff allocated to deal with bullying instances, marketing human resource processes and the training of managers was mentioned as the most effective manners to respond to workplace bullying (P9).

#### **4.4.5      *Anti-bullying policy***

The questions related to this theme aimed to determine whether the institution for which the participants work had an anti-bullying policy in place and, if in existence, whether it was implemented effectively and whether a formal written policy was sufficient enough to combat workplace bullying. Responses were obtained from deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative. In regard to this theme, mixed responses were obtained.

P8 explained that there was a policy in place at the institution to counter workplace bullying and that the policy was effectively implemented. P9 said that although there were protocols in place at the institution to counter workplace bullying, more could be done to create awareness of these protocols and to inform employees of their workings and protections. In contradiction, P4 said that there was no specific policy at the institution in place to counter workplace bullying. Furthermore, the participant explained that there was an employee manual, but that it was not sufficient enough to counter incidents of workplace bullying effectively.

P5 responded: "There is a policy, but people fear victimisation from top management." The issue here is that management were often perpetrators and that they were often reluctant to enforce the policy. P2 and P10 indicated that there were policies in place, but stated that the policies were not aimed at addressing workplace bullying specifically. P10 responded: "Not that I am aware of ... There are policies, and bullying is part of many policies, but not specifically, you know ... Separately aimed at bullying policy." P2 responded as follows:

*We've got lots of policies, you know? This place functions on policies. I'm not sure if there's a policy on workplace bullying, to describe what it is, and to say enough. You know we've got gender awareness, and we've got all these types of things, but I don't think about workplace bullying.*

P7 said that policy was not enough to counter bullying if it was not implemented correctly and effectively. Furthermore, the participant emphasised that policy would only be effective if the employees of the organisation were aware of existing policy and procedures affiliated therewith.

In this regard, P4 stated: “The policy is only as good as the people who implement it ... So, I think, Yes, we need the policy, but we should also adhere and implement the policy.” P9 responded as follows:

*It needs to be accompanied with awareness and education, a zero-tolerance stance by the organisation, senior staff should be encouraged to lead by example, more can be done to also change the workplace culture to incorporate the ethic of care, managers and supervisors need to be trained for the posts they occupy or prompted into [people management skills].*

A need was voiced for policy to be implemented more effectively. In this regard, P6 said: “It needs to be advocated, consulted, implemented and updated. Research on bullying is also a critical informative tool.” P4 and P9 similarly responded that policy was not the only manner in which workplace bullying should be combatted at the institution. Other measures that were also highlighted by the participants included sufficient knowledge of the phenomenon and processes to counter it (P1), awareness campaigns on what constitutes bullying (P7) and a zero-tolerance attitude towards bullying (P9).

#### **4.4.6 Employee awareness of advisory facilities**

The questions related to this theme aimed to determine whether employees were aware of the advisory facilities available to them at the institution. Responses were obtained from deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative.

On average, the participants indicated that employees, within their respected departments, were aware of advisory facilities available to them. P6 commented: “There are regular communications from well-being sections about the services that they provide.” Employees were also provided with a manual and workshops were presented each year to communicate the facilities available to them should they seek help (P1). However, the size of the institution made it difficult to continuously be visible and to spread the information on the process of dealing with workplace bullying effectively (P5).

P10 indicated that not all employees were adequately aware of the advisory facilities that were at their disposal at work and the procedure to follow to report bullying incidents. The participant

commented as follows: "... people are not that much aware. They are not aware they can report such bullying cases to the wellness department or other departments that deal with these issues."

P4 was of the opinion that not enough was being done to make people aware of advisory facilities. P4 and P9 said that the following measures could be implemented to create awareness of advisory facilities for workplace bullying among employees at the institution: marketing of awareness facilities and continuous contact sessions (workshops, presentations, etc.) throughout the year.

#### **4.4.7      *Managing workplace bullying***

The question related to this theme aimed to obtain the opinions of how workplace bullying was managed in the working environment. Responses were obtained from deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative.

On average, the participants were in agreement that employees needed to be protected at all cost. In this regard, P7 said that workplace bullying was an act that needed to be dealt with in a supportive manner and communicated as an unacceptable act in the workplace. P3 indicated that workplace bullying should not be a problem in working environments, as there were systems in place at the institution to protect employees against workplace bullying. The necessity for the effective management of workplace bullying was further emphasised by P5: "Absolutely, as it drains people and is extremely demoralising. I believe a demoralised person is more damaging to the institution than having vacant positions, because demoralised staff members result in a toxic work environment." P10 similarly responded: "People cannot work to their maximum potential when they are being bullied."

The participants suggested the following measures to manage workplace bullying in the institution: Workplace bullying should first try to be prevented as best it can in the workplace (P4, P8 and P9). Should the prevention of the bullying act fail, the organisation/institution needs to manage the situation effectively and in a time-sensitive manner (P4, P8 and P9). Advisory facilities should focus on a more holistic approach to create awareness for workplace bullying and educate employees on the behaviours that constitute bullying and the procedures on how to deal with bullying when it occurs (P9 and P2).

The participants (P2, P9, P1, P3 and P4) recommended the following practices to effectively manage bullying in the workplace: holistic training and education, zero tolerance towards bullying, employee wellness programmes, awareness campaigns, marketing of the grievance procedure, informal steps alleged victims can take to effectively confront the alleged bully, training of managers and supervisors in the dealing of bullying and timeously dealing with complaints.

#### **4.4.8 Prevention measures for workplace bullying**

The questions related to this theme aimed to determine whether there were prevention strategies in place to combat workplace bullying at the institution and if present, whether they were effectively implemented. Furthermore, the questions sought to determine the elements that should be included in a prevention strategy. Responses were obtained from deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative.

On average, the participants indicated that there were prevention measures in place; however, the participants indicated that these prevention measures were ineffective. P1 said that although measures were in place to prevent workplace bullying, the size of the institution made it difficult to communicate these measures to the employees. Furthermore, P10 indicated that the measures in place to counter workplace bullying were not communicated and explained effectively to employees, and as a result were unsuccessful in preventing bullying instances.

The elements that need to be included in a prevention strategy were indicated as follows: establishing an anti-bullying culture, redesigning the working environment, conflict management and resolution systems, changes in leadership and leadership behaviour, anti-bullying policies and awareness campaigns (P7 and P9). In this regard, P6 said:

*An implementable policy with user-friendly links on how to report it [bullying] and the follow-up support processes. Interactive workshops and discussions which do not take too much time. Creating safe spaces for staff members to report bullying early enough. Continuous research on types of bullying, especially in the cyber space and how to deal with it.*

Alternative elements that were noted by participants included the implementation of a hotline that can be used by the victims (P5) and the use of a staff selection system (P4). The hotline would function as a platform where bullying could be reported directly to advisory facilities without fear of victimisation and recourse (P5). Staff selection systems would consist of a recruitment criterion

where management focuses on the behavioural characteristics of future employees and determine whether they would be possible perpetrators (P4). By being able to identify the characteristics associated with bullying behaviour, the institution would employ employees who are not prone to bullying behaviour. In this regard, P4 replied as follows:

*... you should set up recruitment criteria. We can use psychometrics to actually say [these are] the criteria to work at the institution and then we need to look at the behavioural characteristics that we want of people here at the institution and then ... and also psychological factors that might be at a high risk, we should try to eliminate that within the recruitment phase already through various psychometrics and metrics ...*

#### **4.4.9 Intervention measures for workplace bullying**

The questions related to this theme aimed to determine whether there were intervention strategies in place to combat workplace bullying at the institution and if present, whether they were effectively implemented. Furthermore, it sought to determine the elements that should be included in such a strategy. Responses were obtained from deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative.

Intervention strategies were required when preventative measures had failed. From the responses it became evident that intervention strategies existed; however, they lacked in effectiveness and were not applied in a timely manner. The participants mentioned the following elements that needed to be included in an intervention strategy: interactive workshops on how to deal with bullying and the behaviours that constitute the act (P6), timely discussions of incidents of workplace bullying the moment they occur (P6, P9 and P1), links to report bullying and support victims of bullying (P6 and P8), legal guidance on procedures that can be taken against perpetrators (P6 and P9), counselling and debriefing from professionals for victims who are in emotional distress towards psychological healing and protecting the employee (P6 and P9) and mediation between the bully and the victim facilitated by a third party (P6 and P8). In this regard, P9 said:

*Early intervention and training offered to those who have to manage the bullying behaviour, ie. HR personnel and investigators. Clear communication of policies and protocols and codes of conduct, Awareness needs to be promoted, Focus should include psychosocial initiatives, workplace culture and leadership practices.*

In the next section, the results of the quantitative and qualitative phase are discussed and interpreted in relation to the literature presented in this study.

## **4.5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This section discusses and interprets the empirical results and findings of the study based on the data analyses and literature reviewed.

### **4.5.1 Quantitative phase**

This study was conducted among employees at a higher education institution in South Africa. The aim of the quantitative phase of the study was to explore employees' (academic and support staff) perspectives on workplace bullying and policies and practices in place to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the structure and relations between the latent variables that underlaid the data of the measurement model for workplace bullying. The confirmatory factor analyses showed that the three-factor structure (work-related bullying, physically intimidating bullying and person-related bullying) did not fit the data of the sample well; only one of the goodness-of-model-fit indices, namely the CMIN/DF index, indicated an acceptable fit (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.2). Due to this result, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the scale items measuring perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work (workplace bullying). The results showed four factors, namely *Exclusion*, *Hostility*, *Managerial misconduct* and *Humiliation and belittlement*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all four factors indicated high reliability and internal consistency. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the structure and relations between the latent variables that underlaid the data of the four-factor workplace bullying model (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.4). The confirmatory factor analyses showed that the four-factor structure of the workplace bullying model fit fairly well to the data of the sample; all three of the goodness-of-model-fit indices (CMIN/DF, CFI and RMSEA) indicated an acceptable fit. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all factors yielded values above 0.7, indicating high reliability and internal consistency. From the factor means it was deduced that among all workplace bullying factors, the least experienced by the respondents was

*Hostility* (M = 1.23). Furthermore, the factor means indicated that the respondents were more often subjected to *Exclusion* (1.95), *Managerial misconduct* (1.79) and *Humiliation and belittlement* (1.66).

Ngwane (2018:163–164) and Jacobs and Teise (2019:1–3) confirm that teachers and educators across South Africa are experiencing exceptionally high levels of bullying in the working environment. Ngwane (2018:163–164) states that those in supervisory and managerial roles are often the perpetrators of workplace bullying at South African universities (Ngwane, 2018:163–164). Within the context of higher education, bullying behaviour is aimed at attacking or undermining the professional standing of the selected victims, their competence and authority within their positions, and impeding access of selected victims to fundamental resources (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:53). The reasoning behind this tendency is based on the notion that the less observable the bullying act is, the less the chances are of backlash from other employees and employers witnessing such acts (Keashly & Neuman, 2010:53). Ciby and Raya (2014:73) and Notelaers *et al.* (2019) posit that the most common job demands in relation to workplace bullying that are encountered at institutions are unmanageable workloads and unrealistic deadlines, which cause bullying behaviours such as forcing overtime, assigning menial tasks and excessive monitoring of employees.

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the scale items measuring the perceptions of the respondents on policies and practices in place to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution under investigation. The exploratory factor analysis revealed five factors: *Effective policies and procedures*, *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour*, *Quitting job thoughts*, *Institutional supporting practices* and *Leadership support*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all five factors was above 0.7 and indicated high reliability and internal consistency (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.2). From the factor means it was deduced that respondents were between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3) satisfied with the effectiveness of the policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support offered at the institution. Furthermore, the respondents held the opinion between "To some extent" (2) and "To a moderate extent" (3) that people can get away with being hostile and aggressive towards colleagues at the institution. Therefore, there was much room for improvement. Davenport (2014:16) states that workplace bullying is becoming an increasingly experienced phenomenon among educators who lack the knowledge and skill to be able to cope with or handle the phenomenon. Concomitantly, Gilman (2015:7) argues that the longer the

phenomenon is left unattended, the worse it will become and the more difficult it will be to counteract workplace bullying. If bullies believe that they can get away with their behaviour, workplace bullying can become stronger. In this instance, the necessity is emphasised by Woodrow and Guest (2014:38) for proper prevention and intervention measures being put in place to protect employees against the workplace bullying phenomenon. Through the use of intervention measures as both proactive and reactive to workplace bullying, Catley *et al.* (2013:600) believe that employers can play a pre-emptive role in the prevention of and intervention in workplace bullying. Primary interventions (also referred to as prevention measures) include the following: establishing an anti-bullying culture, redesigning the working environment, conflict management and resolution systems, changes in leadership and leadership behaviour, anti-bullying policies, raising awareness of bullying and its consequences, staff selection systems and surveillance (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1).

The results of the study also showed that the respondents' responses to whether they would consider leaving their jobs at the university if they were being bullied and nothing was done to protect them were between "Not at all" (1) and "To some extent" (2). The results contradict previous research conducted (Giga *et al.*, 2008:14; Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11), which found that employees are often willing to leave their working environments should they feel that they are being bullied (see Chapter 2, sections 2.3.4 and 2.7).

Independent sample t-tests, ANOVA tests and effect sizes were used to measure the effect of socio-demographic variables (i.e. gender, nature of employment, nature of employment contract, nature of campus and marital status) on workplace bullying and policies and practices. In terms of gender, the results of the independent sample t-tests revealed no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male and female respondents for all the workplace bullying and policies and practices factors (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1). Similar to the findings of the study, Botha (2019:22) found that there is no association between gender and workplace bullying. In contrast, Chan *et al.* (2019:6), Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:102) and Salin (cited by Jones, 2006) found that there are clear gender differences in terms of the prevalence of work bullying, where women reported higher incidents of bullying than men in the workplace. Eagly *et al.* (cited by Salin, 2021:6) found that men are less willing to admit to victimisation, as they perceive the act of reporting bullying as harmful to their self-image. Namie and Namie (2018:57) explain that this might be the reason why a lower prevalence rate of workplace bullying is reported for men (see Chapter 2, section 2.10). Furthermore, the results of the independent sample t-tests

revealed no significant differences between the mean scores of male and female respondents for four of the policies and practices factors. However, the results showed that the means scores of male and female respondents differed significantly for *Institutional supporting practices*, where the male respondents were more positive about the supporting practices offered at the institution than the female respondents.

The results of the t-tests indicated no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of academic and support staff respondents for *Hostility and Managerial misconduct* as well as for all the policies and practices factors. However, the results of the t-tests revealed that the support staff respondents were more subjected to exclusion and humiliation and belittlement than the academic staff respondents (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.2). Westbrook *et al.* (2021:34) found that among management and other employees, administrative staff reported being bullied more regularly. Kakumba *et al.* (2014:71) also found that bullying is taking place more often among administrative staff and senior staff, as these individuals are usually in top administrative and management positions and are the ones mandated with the responsibility of resolving these issues.

In terms of nature of employment contract, the results of the independent sample t-tests showed no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of full-time (permanent) and fixed-term/temporary/postdoctoral fellowship respondents for all the factors of workplace bullying and policies and practices (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.3). Kivimäki *et al.* (2000:657) found similar results among a cohort of male and female hospital employees, where no significant difference between the mean scores of temporary or permanent employees in regard to workplace bullying experiences were reported. In contradiction, Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:102) as well as Notelaers *et al.* (2010:6) found that temporary employees might be more at risk of workplace bullying and might be too afraid to protect themselves against workplace bullies. According to Notelaers *et al.* (2010:6), temporary employees can also be at risk of being seen as a “potential disturbance” to the social setting of permanent employees. Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:104) state that workplace bullying can be influenced by “employment flexibility”.

In terms of nature of campus, the results of the ANOVA test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the different campuses of the university (A, B and C) for all the workplace bullying factors and for all the policies and practices factors (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.4). However, the effect sizes indicated that the respondents

from Campus B were more subjected to hostility and agreed more that people can get away with being hostile and aggressive towards colleagues at the university than respondents from Campus C. The respondents from Campus C were more positive about the institutional supporting practices offered than Campus B. Therefore, it is evident that there were slight differences in the respondents' experiences of workplace bullying as well as the supporting practices offered at the different campuses of the institution. This once more reinforces the notion that employees feel less safe if the environment that they are in is hostile or perceived as hostile (Bradley *et al.*, 2012:156; Dollard & Karasek, 2010:209) (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.4). Management and supervisors play a defining role in the manner in which bullying is dealt with at organisations and institutions (Wang & Hsieh, 2013:786, Woodrow & Guest, 2017:2). Ensuring that employees are aware of advisory facilities as well as processes and procedures available to them when encountering workplace bullying is of the utmost importance (Einarsen *et al.*, 2002:433; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:25). According to Zahlquist *et al.* (2019:38), the key individuals who are needed to resolve workplace bullying successfully are human resource managers and elected safety representatives.

In terms of marital status, the results of the ANOVA test revealed no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the different marital categories for all the factors of workplace bullying and policies and practices (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.5). However, the results of the effect sizes showed that the respondents who were married were less subjected to exclusion than the respondents who were in a relationship, but unmarried. This finding is confirmed by studies conducted by Yadav *et al.* (2020:27), Giorgi *et al.* (2013:190) and Asakura *et al.* (cited by Giorgi *et al.*, 2013:188). These authors found that married individuals reported lower instances of workplace bullying than unmarried individuals. Asakura *et al.* (cited by Giorgi *et al.*, 2013:188) argue that marriage can act as a source of support during bullying experiences.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation test was used to test the correlations between age, highest qualification, years working at the university and workplace bullying factors and policies and practices factors (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.5). The results showed no correlation between age and workplace bullying; however, the results indicated that the older the respondents were, the more positive they were regarding the institutional supporting practices offered. Botha (2019:25) and Skuzińska *et al.* (2020:16) report that there is no clear correlation between age and workplace bullying. Cunliff and Mostert (2012:6) found in their study, in contrast to the findings of the above authors, that younger employees tend to experience higher rates of bullying than older

employees. These findings are further confirmed in a study by Lange *et al.* (2019:242), where it was also found that older employees reported significantly less experiences of bullying than younger employees.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that the less qualified the respondents were, the more they were subjected to acts of humiliation and belittlement and the more they would consider leaving the organisation should workplace bullying occur. Similarly, Moreno-Jiménez *et al.* (2008:101) found that employees with lower levels of education (elementary level) reported being bullied more often than those with secondary (medium) and tertiary (higher) education backgrounds. This may be due to the notion that education can offer security to individuals by supplying them with skills to manage conflict and negative behaviour in the working environment (Moreno-Jiménez *et al.*, 2008:101). Similarly, Niedhammer *et al.* (2007:348) and Cunliffe and Mostert (2012:8) found in their studies that those with qualifications or higher levels of education were bullied less than those without. Cunliffe and Mostert (2012:4) argue that those who are more educated are more skilled and superior and, as a result, may experience less bullying than those with lower levels of education.

Finally, the results of this study indicated that the longer the respondents had worked for the institution, the more they had experienced instances of managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement. This tendency is confirmed by Fontes *et al.* (2019:538), who found that employees who were employed for five to ten years experienced more bullying than those employed for under a year. In contradiction to these results, Owoyemi (2011:75) found that those employed for a period of one to five years reported higher incidences of bullying than those with longer work tenures. In a more recent study by Awai *et al.* (2021:81), the authors came to a similar conclusion and report higher rates of bullying among individuals employed for 10 years or less as supposed to their counterparts being employed for more than 10 years.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation test was used to determine the correlation between workplace bullying factors and policies and practices factors (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.6). The results of the correlation test indicated medium to large positive correlations between workplace bullying factors (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.6.1). This indicated that when one of the workplace bullying factors were present, the other factors were likely to be present as well. This means that the more hostile the working environment, the more the chance of managerial misconduct, exclusion and humiliation and belittlement taking place at the institution, and vice versa.

The results of the correlation test between policies and practices factors showed small to large positive as well as negative correlations (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.6.2). All of the factors correlated positively with each other, except with the factor *Quitting job thoughts*. This indicates that when effective policies and procedures are present in the institution, the respondents felt more positive about institutional supporting practices and leadership support offered by the institution. The results also indicated that when effective policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support offered were perceived or experienced as positive, the respondents felt less inclined to want to leave their jobs at the institution.

The results of the correlation tests revealed small to large negative correlations for all the workplace bullying factors (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) with three of the policies and practices factors (*Effective policies and procedures, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*) and a large positive correlation with *Quitting job thoughts* (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.6.3). This shows that when the respondents considered the policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support adequate and effective, they tended to feel less excluded, they perceived the workplace environment as less hostile and managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement were less likely to take place. Furthermore, when the respondents felt subjected to exclusion, hostility, managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement, they would consider leaving their jobs at the institution.

From the quantitative results it is evident that workplace bullying was experienced, to a certain extent, at the higher education institution under investigation. Furthermore, the results revealed that there was much improvement needed with regard to the institution's policies and practices in place to combat inappropriate workplace behaviour at the institution. It is also evident from the results that socio-demographic variables (in particular nature of employment, marital status, age, highest qualification and tenure) played a role in the experiences of workplace bullying, as also suggested by Cunliffe and Mostert (2012:2). The section to follow discusses and interprets the qualitative findings of the study.

#### 4.5.2 Qualitative phase

The aim of the qualitative phase of the study was to explore the opinions of keystone individuals (deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative) regarding bullying behaviour and processes in place to counter this behaviour at the institution under investigation.

The results of the thematic analysis revealed nine main themes, namely experiences of bullying behaviour, reporting of bullying behaviour, action taken against bullying incidents, seriousness of bullying incidents, anti-bullying policy, employee awareness of advisory facilities, managing workplace bullying, prevention measures for workplace bullying and intervention measures for workplace bullying.

**Experiences of bullying behaviour.** From the qualitative findings of the study it is evident that workplace bullying was a phenomenon that was experienced by academic and support staff at the higher education institution under investigation. The respondents highlighted that they were subjected to the following negative actions in working environments: impossible workloads, micro-management, withholding of employees leave, different treatment according to position and seniority of employees (i.e. managerial misconduct), removing the responsibilities of employees (i.e. exclusion), shouting, manipulation of employees, falsely accusing other employees and telling employees that they were useless (i.e. humiliation and belittlement). Furthermore, it was confirmed by the quantitative results that employees were subjected to *Exclusion* (1.95), *Managerial misconduct* (1.79), *Humiliation and belittlement* (1.66) and *Hostility* (1.23) between “Never” (1) and “Now and then” (2). According to An and Kang (2016:234) and Hollis (2017a:64–65), workplace bullying is a phenomenon that is experienced throughout various institutions across various working environments. Therefore, bullying in higher education institutions is no exception, as also confirmed by Ngwane (2018:163–164) and Jacobs and Teise (2019:1–3). In general, employees are exposed to the following negative behaviour in workplaces, which correlates with the findings of this research: impossible workloads, the removing of responsibilities of employees (Ciby & Raya, 2014:73; Notelaers *et al.*, 2019), micro-management, shouting, manipulation of employees, falsely accusing other employees (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011:74; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011:425–426), telling employees that they are useless, different treatment according to position and seniority of employees and withholding of employees’ leave (Green, Collingwood & Ross, 2010:8–11) (also refer to Chapter 2, section 2.9 in this regard).

**Reporting of bullying behaviour.** The qualitative findings of the study indicated that there was underreporting of workplace bullying among academic and support staff at the higher education institution under investigation. This tendency was confirmed by the quantitative results: The respondents reported that they felt “To some extent” (2) comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to the human resource department without fear of recourse. According to the ILO (2020b), there is chronic underreporting of bullying and sexual harassment incidences across the world (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1). The literature reviewed revealed that fear of recourse and victimisation is indicated as the main reason for why employees do not report bullying incidents (Bristow, 2016; Burke & Mouton, 2013:1). Fear is a weapon used by the workplace bully to make victims feel secluded, alone and afraid of the possible recourse coupled with reporting bullying in the workplace (ILO, 2020b; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010:214). Furthermore, fear is identified by D’Cruz and Noronha (2011:270) as one of the biggest side effects of workplace bullying on bystanders witnessing the act. The ILO (2020b) states that the underreporting of bullying incidents can be severely detrimental to the victims, their organisations and the people with whom they work. In order to counter the underreporting of workplace bullying, the Draft Code of Good Practice on the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace holds that it is the right of an employee to disclose information on irregular or criminal conduct in the workplace without fear of repercussions or recourse from the employer (RSA, 2020:29–30). Anti-bullying policies should be developed and implemented to counter workplace bullying effectively (Rayner & Lewis, 2011:330–332; Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). Policies should outline the procedures, including reporting procedures, to follow in dealing with workplace bullying (Salin, 2008:225–227). Effective training and education of employees on the content of the policies are of utmost importance (Cooper *et al.*, 2017:5 & Salin *et al.*, 2019:7).

**Action taken against bullying incidents.** Mixed results were obtained from the qualitative findings of the study regarding action taken against bullying incidents. On the one hand, some of the respondents stated that there was an internal process in place that dealt with bullying incidents at the institution under investigation. This was also confirmed by the quantitative findings. On the other hand, some of the respondents indicated that more action against workplace bullying should be taken in the higher education institution under investigation. Negative behaviour such as micro-management and impossible workloads were highlighted as subtle acts of bullying that received no attention from management. Some of the respondents emphasised that there was a need for a clear definition that outlined acts that were considered as workplace bullying. Bullying needs to be dealt with effectively and sufficiently in organisations and institutions, as the act has negative

impacts on employees as well as on organisations (Burke & Mouton, 2013:5; Kortjan & Von Solms, 2014:29; Law *et al.*, 2011:1782; Livingstone *et al.*, 2016:11). The Draft Code of Good Practice on the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace supports this notion and further stipulates that violence and harassment (which include workplace bullying, physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse) should be regarded as a form of unfair discrimination and should be dealt with accordingly in the workplace (Ramjettan, 2020). Section 9(3) of the Constitution and section 6(3) of the EEA prohibit unfair discrimination, and section 186(2) of the LRA deals with unfair labour practices (ILO, 2020:18; RSA, 2020). Furthermore, the conflict escalation model of Glasl discusses the phases and stages of conflict escalation and outlines conflict de-escalation strategies that can be used by managers to handle conflict in the workplace (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.3).

**Seriousness of bullying incidents.** The qualitative findings of the study indicated that workplace bullying at the institution under investigation was not being taken seriously enough. The findings revealed that obvious and clear cases of workplace bullying were adequately dealt with in the institution; however, concerns were raised regarding the way subtle acts of bullying were dealt with in the institution. The quantitative results revealed that the respondents would consider quitting their jobs if workplace bullying was not being taken seriously enough at the institution for which they work. In order to successfully combat bullying in the working environment, organisations and institutions need to supply their employees, managers and supervisors with the necessary resources to deal with the phenomenon (Salin *et al.*, 2019:7). These resources include the training of managers on procedures to follow when bullying occurs, a clear zero-tolerance stance against bullying behaviour in the workplace and awareness campaigns that inform the workforce on what constitutes bullying behaviour and how to identify and report instances of workplace bullying (RSA, 2020:35; Salin *et al.*, 2019:7; Zahlquist *et al.*, 2019:38). However, without commitment from management and management's prioritisation of a PSC, employers will be ineffective in their ability to protect employees from acts of workplace bullying (Idris *et al.*, 2011:2) (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.4).

**Anti-bullying policy.** The qualitative findings revealed mixed results regarding the availability and effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy at the institution under investigation. The findings revealed that although policies and procedures were in place to counteract and combat workplace bullying, the efficiency and effectiveness of these policies were questionable at the institution under investigation. As indicated in the sections above, it is utmost importance that anti-

bullying policies be developed and implemented to counter workplace bullying effectively (Rayner & Lewis, 2011:330–332; Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12). Management should ensure that the employees are made aware of policies in place to protect them and procedures to follow to report bullying incidents (Smith & Coel, 2018:1). According to Cooper *et al.* (2017:5) and Salin *et al.* (2019:7), without the strict enforcement of anti-bullying policies and effective training and education of employees on the content of the anti-bullying policies, policies will not be effective when dealing with workplace bullying (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1.5). Similarly, Smith and Coel (2018:1) state that if policies are not communicated effectively and employees are not made aware of policies in place to protect them, the policies will fail to protect the victims of workplace bullying.

**Employee awareness of advisory facilities.** The qualitative findings showed that the research participants were aware of the advisory facilities available to them. It was mentioned that employees received regular communications from the wellness section at the institution about the services that they provided; however, it was also noted that more could be done to create awareness of these facilities. It became clear from the opinions of the respondents that through the avocation and promotion of advisory facilities across the institution, workplace bullying could be combated effectively. Furthermore, the quantitative results of the study revealed that respondents were between “To some extent” (2) and “To a moderate extent” (3) satisfied with the supporting practices offered at the higher education institution under investigation; therefore, there was room for improvement. The raising of awareness of workplace bullying and the possible procedures in place to counter the phenomenon is of the utmost importance (Salin, 2013:109–110; Vartia & Leka, 2011:360–361). Zahlquist *et al.* (2019:38) state that when conflict arises in the form of workplace bullying, the key actors that need to manage the phenomenon are human resource managers and elected safety representatives. The Draft Code of Good Practice indicates that it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that all policies and procedures are communicated effectively to all workers (RSA, 2020:36). Furthermore, Ferris *et al.* (2021:9) state that employees can be informed of workplace bullying behaviour and procedures related thereto through the signing of the organisation’s code of conduct, which includes sections on available advisory facilities and awareness programmes. Ferris *et al.* (2021:18–19) further suggest that awareness of workplace bullying and available advisory facilities can be created through social media, email, podcasts, virtual workshops and virtual training, to name a few.

**Managing workplace bullying.** From the qualitative findings of the study, it was evident that the research participants were of the view that managing workplace bullying should be of extreme importance in the institution under investigation. The following practices to manage workplace bullying were suggested by the research participants: holistic training and education, zero tolerance towards bullying, employee wellness programmes, awareness campaigns, marketing of the grievance procedure, informal steps alleged victims can take to effectively confront the alleged bully, training of managers and supervisors in the dealing of bullying and timeously dealing with complaints. According to Catley *et al.* (2013:600), it is necessary and possible for the employer to play a pre-emptive role in the prevention of and intervention in workplace bullying (Catley *et al.*, 2013:600). Chapter 3, section 3.3 elaborated in detail on how workplace bullying should be managed and also suggested practical intervention measures.

**Prevention measures for workplace bullying.** From the qualitative findings of the study, the research participants reported that there were prevention measures in place at the institution under investigation; however, these measures were ineffective. The elements that need to be included in a prevention strategy were presented by the research participants as follows: establishing an anti-bullying culture, redesigning the working environment, conflict management and resolution systems, changes in leadership and leadership behaviour, anti-bullying policies and awareness campaigns. According to Salin *et al.* (2018:10–12), primary intervention measures are measures used to reduce the risk of bullying. According to Vartia and Leka (2011:360–361), primary interventions aim at preventing workplace bullying by reducing the risks associated therewith and are proactive in nature. Primary intervention measures include the following: establishing an anti-bullying culture (Yamada, 2008:6–8), redesigning the working environment (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12; Vartia & Leka, 2011:360–361), conflict management and resolution systems (Hauge *et al.*, 2007), changes in leadership and leadership behaviour (Salin *et al.*, 2018:10–12), anti-bullying policies (Rayner & Lewis, 2011:330–332), awareness campaigns (Branch & Murray, 2015:24–25), staff selection systems (Matthews, 2017:27; Mitchell *et al.*, 2014:149) and surveillance (Johnson, 2015:2389). The research findings indicated that without proper prevention methods and strategies in place, employees at the institution did not feel protected and safe in their working environment.

**Intervention measures for workplace bullying.** From the qualitative findings of the study, it was evident that intervention strategies were present in the institution under investigation; however, they were perceived as being ineffective and were not applied in a timeous manner. The

participants suggested the following elements to be included in an intervention strategy for workplace bullying: interactive workshops on how to deal with workplace bullying in its entirety, timely discussions of incidents of workplace bullying, links to report bullying and support victims of bullying, legal guidance on procedures that can be taken against perpetrators, counselling and debriefing, and mediation between the bully and the victim facilitated by a third party. Salin *et al.* (2018:12–13) identified two different secondary intervention categories known as informal and formal interventions (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2). The most prominent informal intervention strategies are as follows: informal investigation into the alleged bullying behaviour (Woodrow & Guest, 2017:224), social support (Branch & Murray, 2015:16), social training (Nel, 2019:152), mediation (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:12–14), coaching (Namie & Namie, 2009:10) and separating the bully and the target (Ciby & Raya, 2014:79). The most prominent formal intervention strategies are as follows: written warnings (Einarsen, Mykletun *et al.*, 2017:48), withdrawal of supervisory responsibilities/demotions (Dzurec *et al.*, 2013), dismissal (Hershcovis *et al.*, 2015:14) and formal incident reports and investigation (Branch & Murray, 2015:16). Tertiary intervention measures are used to reduce any potential damage that has been caused by the bullying behaviour and comprises rehabilitation and counselling approaches (Salin *et al.*, 2018:12; Vartia and Leka, 2011). Tertiary intervention measures include counselling and debriefing (Johnson, 2011:59–60), integrated counselling programmes (Hamish, 2017:24), inpatient treatment (Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020:399), and physiotherapy and physical exercise (Hamish, 2017:24; Vartia & Leka, 2011:370). The results of the study as well as the personal accounts of the participants and respondents indicated that when primary prevention measures fail to stop bullying from occurring, intervention becomes necessary and the employer should take action (see Chapter 4, sections 4.3.6.3 and 4.4.9).

From the quantitative results and qualitative findings, it was evident that workplace bullying was present and had been experienced at the institution under investigation. Although policies and practices were in place at the institution to a certain extent, much more could be done to implement them effectively and to create awareness of workplace bullying, the procedures to follow to report bullying incidents and supporting practices available to support the victims. Furthermore, there was a need for primary, secondary and tertiary intervention measures to counter workplace bullying effectively and timely.

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined and discussed the empirical results (quantitative) and findings (qualitative) of the study. The first section explained the processes followed to analyse and report the results of the quantitative phase of the study.

The second section presented and discussed the empirical results and analysis of the quantitative data. First, the biographical information was presented and discussed. Second, the descriptive statistics of the workplace bullying scale as well as the results of the confirmatory factor analyses of the workplace bullying measurement model were presented and discussed. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed that the three-factor structure of the workplace bullying scale did not fit well to the data of the sample; therefore, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the workplace bullying scale. The exploratory factor analysis yielded four factors, namely *Exclusion*, *Hostility*, *Managerial misconduct* and *Humiliation and belittlement*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the factors showed high reliability and internal consistency. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed that the four-factor structure of the workplace bullying scale fit well to the data of the sample. Third, the descriptive statistics of the policies and practices scale as well as the results of the exploratory factor analyses were presented and discussed. The exploratory factor analysis revealed five factors, namely *Effective policies and procedures*, *Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour*, *Quitting job thoughts*, *Institutional supporting practices* and *Leadership support*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the factors showed high reliability and internal consistency. Fourth, the effect of nominal biographical variables on workplace bullying and policies and practices was presented and discussed. Thereafter, the correlation between ordinal biographical variables and workplace bullying and policies and practices were presented and elaborated on. It was evident from the results that there was an association between socio-demographic variables (in particular nature of employment, marital status, age, highest qualification and tenure) and the experiences of workplace bullying. Next, the correlations between workplace bullying and policies and practices factors were discussed. The correlation tests showed that the respondents felt less excluded, felt less exposed to managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement and perceived the workplace environment as less hostile when they had positive perceptions about the implementation of policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support. On the other hand, the respondents would consider leaving their jobs at the institution when they felt subjected to exclusion, hostility, managerial misconduct and humiliation and belittlement.

The third section presented and discussed the empirical findings and analyses of the qualitative data. The results of the thematic analysis revealed nine main themes, namely experiences of bullying behaviour, reporting of bullying behaviour, action taken against bullying incidents, seriousness of bullying incidents, anti-bullying policy, employee awareness of advisory facilities, managing workplace bullying, prevention measures for workplace bullying and intervention measures for workplace bullying.

The fourth and final section interpreted and discussed the empirical results and findings of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study in relation to the literature reviewed. From the results of the study it was evident that workplace bullying existed in the institution under investigation. Furthermore, it was found that although there were procedures and policies in place to counteract the phenomenon, these procedures and policies were not continuously successful in dealing with workplace bullying. The results from the study also indicated that through the effective implementation and avocation of procedures and policies, workplace bullying can be dealt with successfully.

The next and final chapter outlines the conclusions of the study in relation to the research objectives of the study as stated in Chapter 1.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 provided the introduction to the study, stated the problem, posed the research questions and objectives, and outlined the research methodology followed in the study. Chapters 2 and 3 provided the theoretical background to the study as well as a review of the relevant literature on workplace bullying. Chapter 4 presented the empirical results (quantitative) and findings (qualitative) of the study as well as an interpretation against the theoretical (chapters 2 and 3) background. This chapter concludes the study and unfolds in the following way. Firstly, the chapter presents the findings and conclusions on the research objectives of the study. This entails the conclusions on the research methodology and specific research objectives as well as recommendations culminating from the research (literature review and empirical study). Secondly, the chapter suggests areas for future research to further the understanding of bullying in the working environment. This chapter is concluded with a summary of the study.

#### **5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main research objective was to determine the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa.

To realise the main objective, the following specific research objectives were posed:

- To analyse the theoretical approaches and perspectives that are linked to workplace bullying and to determine how they can contribute to creating a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation
- To identify relevant measures that can be used by management in higher education institutions to address the workplace bullying phenomenon adequately
- To document and analyse the results of the empirical study on workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa
- To draw up conclusions and recommendations emanating from the literature review and empirical findings to assist higher education institutions to successfully address workplace bullying.

The next section presents and discusses the findings and conclusions on the research objectives.

### **5.2.1      *Research methodology***

This research adopted a pragmatic worldview, as it accepted a flexible approach, including a mix of methods and approaches, to solving the research problem. The research methodology used for this study comprised a literature review and an empirical study. Furthermore, this research employed a mixed-method sequential explanatory research design using quantitative and qualitative research approaches, methods and techniques. The research methodology used in the study was appropriate, as substantiated by the following conclusions:

#### **Conclusion 1:**

The literature review provided this study with a theoretical framework for the understanding of concepts and theories that are related to the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, the literature review outlined and discussed the forms of bullying manifesting in working environments, characteristics of the perpetrator and the target as well as the antecedents and effects (physical, psychological, economic and public) of workplace bullying. It also gave an overview of the prevalence of workplace bullying on a national and global scale as well as in higher education institutions. It furthermore revealed the association between selected socio-demographic variables and workplace bullying. Therefore, it is clear that the literature review provided an in-depth understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon and the variables that influence it.

#### **Conclusion 2:**

The literature review provided the study with a basis from which the researcher selected the research instruments as well as the variables, items and questions that were included in the questionnaire and interview schedule. Therefore, it can be concluded that a thorough literature study is critical in selecting the research instruments and identifying the variables, items and questions that should be included in the research instruments.

#### **Conclusion 3:**

The validity of the research study was strengthened by means of triangulation. Triangulation allowed the researcher to study workplace bullying in higher education from more than one

perspective to enrich knowledge and to test validity. Triangulation was accomplished through the following:

- The research study employed a literature review as well as an empirical study.
- Regarding the empirical study, a mixed-method research design was used, employing quantitative as well as qualitative research approaches, methods and techniques in sampling, data collection as well as data analyses processes.
- The sampling of the research included three target groups, namely academic staff, support staff and people employed in managerial positions such as deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative. Data were collected from the different target groups to obtain different perspectives on the exposure to bullying and victimisation at work as well as policies and practices in place to counter these behaviours at the institution under investigation.

#### **Conclusion 4:**

The quantitative data analysis revealed that the identified constructs of workplace bullying (*Exclusion, Hostility, Managerial misconduct and Humiliation and belittlement*) and policies and practices (*Effective policies and procedures, Ineffective protection from hostile workplace behaviour, Quitting job thoughts, Institutional supporting practices and Leadership support*) could be validated; this was done through deductive reasoning. The values obtained for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Barlett's test of sphericity and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy for each construct confirmed that the questionnaire provided a valid data-collection instrument (see Chapter 4). The Statistic Consultation Services of NWU supported the researcher with the data analyses and reviewed the documentation thereof, and thereby ensured the statistical accuracy of the quantitative results as well as the reporting thereof. The statistical software program SPSS 27 was used to analyse the data.

### **Conclusion 5:**

The qualitative data analysis and findings provided an in-depth understanding of the experiences of workplace bullying at the higher education institution under investigation as well the intervention measures required to address the phenomenon adequately at the institution; this exercise took place through inductive reasoning.

### **5.2.2      *Research objective 1***

The first objective was to analyse the theoretical approaches and perspectives that are linked to workplace bullying and to determine how they can contribute to creating a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Research objective 1 was addressed in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 examined the theoretical approaches and perspectives inherent to workplace bullying to obtain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. The following section presents the conclusions on Research objective 1.

### **Conclusion 1:**

From Chapter 2 it is evident that the concepts of workplace bullying, mobbing and harassment are often used synonymously. German-speaking countries prefer to use the term ‘mobbing’, whereas in English-speaking countries, the term ‘bullying’ is preferred. Furthermore, workplace bullying is considered as a type of workplace harassment, involves one or more perpetrators and occurs at various degrees of frequency and severity. Workplace bullying is defined as the continuous enactment of negative and aggressive behaviour on an employee or group of employees by another employee or group of employees over a period and can cause degradation of the employee’s mental and physical health. A distinction is made between direct and indirect workplace bullying.

### **Conclusion 2:**

Due to the complexity of workplace bullying, more than one theoretical lens is often required to understand this phenomenon. This study investigated the Leymann model, Tajfel’s social identity theory, the conflict escalation model of Glasl and PSC theory. The Leymann model argues that organisational factors, such as leadership behaviour, work design, the victims’ socially exposed

position and department morale, are determining factors of workplace bullying. From Tajfel's social identity theory, it can be deduced that any form of bullying, be it public or private, is based on an interpersonal phenomenon that finds its basis in a dynamic interaction between two or more parties. Social demographics (e.g. sex, ethnicity, race and age) play an important role in understanding social identity. Demographical differences among employees can lead to both negative and positive outcomes in relation to the manner in which they are perceived in the working environment. PSC theory argues that a psychosocial safety work climate is needed to protect all stakeholders (employees, unions, and health and safety representatives) from social and psychological harm. A PSC is largely determined by management, and is indicative of management's priority for workers' psychological health. Glasl's conflict escalation model provides an understanding of how conflict escalates in the workplace and what can be done to mediate and combat conflict in the working environment. Zapf and Gross (2001) used the conflict escalation model to indicate the specific interventions needed for workplace bullying (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.1).

### **Conclusion 3:**

The literature reviewed showed that there are different forms of workplace bullying, which include dispute-related bullying, predatory bullying, scapegoating, workplace harassment, humour-orientated bullying, work-related stalking, the bullying of workplace newcomers, cyberbullying, the judicial or system bullying, and retaliation from whistleblowing. The different forms of workplace bullying underline the necessity not only for workplace bullying to be taken seriously in the working environment, but also for those combatting workplace bullying to be able to identify the different forms in which workplace bullying can be enacted.

### **Conclusion 4:**

The literature reviewed showed that different characteristics can be ascribed to the perpetrator and target. This allowed for a better understanding of why certain individuals bully and why other individuals are more prone to being bullied. The characteristics identified as being associated with the perpetrator were physical aggression, fear and the influence of certain surroundings in the workplace, such as toxic masculinity or organisational culture. The targets of workplace bullying often possess traits such as being withdrawn, socially anxious and lonely in the case of the passive target and more sociable and less lonely in the case of the aggressive victim.

**Conclusion 5:**

It became evident from the literature review, that antecedents of workplace bullying include job demands, management and leadership styles of supervisors, lack of adaptation to change and interpersonal conflict. This is also in line with the Leymann model, which suggests that organisational factors are determinants of workplace bullying.

**Conclusion 6:**

From the literature review it became evident that the effects of workplace bullying are detrimental to the victims as well as the institutions for which they work. The literature allowed for a better understanding of the physical, psychological, economic and public effects of workplace bullying on the targets/victims, organisations and bystanders.

**Conclusion 7:**

The literature review showed that bullying in working environments, including higher education institutions, is a phenomenon that is not geographically limited in its occurrence. In terms of the global perspective, a multitude of examples were provided to support this notion. In terms of a national perspective, South Africa was found to be no different than the international examples, with workplace bullying identified as being experienced in several working environments in the country. The global and national perspectives emphasised the need to develop a better understanding of workplace bullying and for interventions to address this phenomenon.

**Conclusion 8:**

It is evident from the literature review that a multitude of socio-demographic variables, such as gender, age, marital status, level of education and length of employment, have an influence on the experiences of workplace bullying. In general, it can be concluded that a sound literature review is critical in providing an in-depth understanding of bullying in working environments, including higher education institutions.

**5.2.3      *Research objective 2***

The second objective was to identify relevant measures that can be used by management in higher education institutions to address the workplace bullying phenomenon adequately.

Research objective 2 was addressed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 reviewed the legislative response and intervention measures that can be used in order to combat workplace bullying effectively and successfully. The following section presents the conclusions on Research objective 2.

#### **Conclusion 1:**

From the chapter, it is clear that the ILO played and still plays an important role in encouraging decent employment opportunities and enhancing the social protection of employees in their working environments. The organisation is also an advocate against violence and harassment at work, which includes workplace bullying, and recently published ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206, aiming to prevent and address violence and harassment in working environments. The legislative framework of South Africa can offer some protection to employees of the country from workplace bullying, as also indicated in Chapter 3. Furthermore, in August 2020, the Minister of Employment and Labour published a Draft Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, which also specifically makes reference to workplace bullying and provides guidelines to addressing bullying in working environments in South Africa.

#### **Conclusion 2:**

Chapter 3 outlined the primary, secondary and tertiary intervention measures that can be used to address the workplace bullying phenomenon adequately. Primary intervention measures aim at solving workplace conflicts before they turn into bullying situations. Primary intervention measures were identified as establishing an anti-bullying culture, redesigning the working environment, conflict management and resolution systems, changes in leadership and leadership behaviour, anti-bullying policies, raising awareness of bullying and its consequences, staff selection systems and surveillance. Secondary intervention measures consist of informal and formal intervention measures that become necessary should primary intervention measures fail. Informal secondary intervention measures were identified as informal investigation into the alleged bullying behaviour, social support, social training, mediation, coaching and separating the bully and the target. Formal secondary intervention measures were identified as written warnings, withdrawal of supervisory responsibilities/demotions, dismissal and formal incident reports and investigation. Tertiary intervention measures are used when trying to reduce or halt any potential damage that may have been caused by bullying and include rehabilitation and counselling approaches. Tertiary measures were identified as counselling and debriefing, integrated counselling programmes,

inpatient treatment, and physiotherapy and physical exercise. Through the implementation and continuous enforcing of the above measures, employees can be made to feel safe and protected should they encounter workplace bullying.

#### **5.2.4      *Research objective 3***

The third objective aimed to document and analyse the results of the empirical study on workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa.

Research objective 3 was addressed in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 presented and discussed the empirical results and findings of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. The study used a mixed-method approach, employing quantitative and qualitative research approaches, methods and techniques. The quantitative phase collected data among academic and support staff at the institution under investigation by using a web-based survey. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS 27.0 and the results were reported in tables and diagrams. The qualitative phase collected data through in-depth interviews with deans, deputy deans, school directors, and a People and Culture representative. The data were analysed using thematic analysis and provided nine main themes. The views obtained from the participants were reflected upon according to these themes. The following section presents the conclusions on Research objective 3.

#### **Conclusion 1:**

From the quantitative results it became evident that in the higher education institution under investigation, workplace bullying was being experienced to a certain extent. The means obtained for the individual items of the workplace bullying scale varied between “Never”, “Now and then” and “Monthly”. Furthermore, the means of the workplace bullying factors indicated that the respondents were the most subjected to exclusion, followed by managerial misconduct, humiliation and belittlement, and hostility (the least). The results also revealed that there was ample room for improvement in terms of the institution’s policies and practices aimed at combatting and counteracting workplace bullying at the institution. The results (t-tests) also indicated an association between exclusion and humiliation and belittlement and nature of employment (academic and support staff). Furthermore, the effect sizes showed small to medium effects for the following socio-demographic variables: gender, nature of employment contract, campus and marital status. The Spearman’s rank-order correlation tests indicated correlations

between age, highest qualification, years working at the university and some of the workplace bullying and policies and practices factors. The results of the correlation tests between the workplace bullying and policies and practices factors revealed that when the respondents considered the policies and procedures, institutional supporting practices and leadership support adequate and effective, the less likely they were to report that they were subjected to workplace bullying (exclusion, managerial misconduct, humiliation and belittlement, and hostility). On the other hand, when the respondents felt subjected to workplace bullying, they indicated that they would consider leaving their jobs at the institution.

### **Conclusion 2:**

The qualitative findings revealed nine themes that were associated with workplace bullying at the higher education institution under investigation. These themes were experiences of bullying behaviour, reporting of bullying behaviour, action taken against bullying incidents, seriousness of bullying incidents, anti-bullying policy, employee awareness of advisory facilities, managing workplace bullying, prevention measures for workplace bullying and intervention measures for workplace bullying. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative results to a large extent.

### **Conclusion 3:**

From the quantitative results and qualitative findings, it was evident that workplace bullying was present and was experienced by academic and support staff at the institution under investigation. Although policies and practices were in place at the institution, much more could be done to implement them effectively and to create awareness of workplace bullying, the procedures to follow to report bullying incidents and supporting practices available to support the victims. Furthermore, there was a need for primary, secondary and tertiary intervention measures to counter workplace bullying effectively and timely at the institution.

## **5.2.5      *Research objective 4***

The fourth objective was to draw up conclusions and recommendations emanating from the literature review and empirical findings to assist higher education institutions to successfully address workplace bullying.

Research objective 4 is addressed in this chapter, Chapter 5. Sections 5.1 to 5.2 presented and discussed the conclusion of this research, specifically in terms of the research objectives outlined

in Chapter 1. Consequently, the next section presents the recommendations of the research emanating from the literature review and empirical results (quantitative) and findings (qualitative).

### **Recommendation 1:**

Bullying in the working environment has become an increasingly detrimental phenomenon that can also be observed in higher education institutions. It is recommended that higher education institutions establish an anti-bullying culture by:

- adopting a clear zero-tolerance stance against bullying behaviour;
- having an anti-bullying policy – such a policy should entail clear definitions of the acts (subtle and obvious) that are associated with workplace bullying and the procedures to follow to report and handle incidents;
- having and implementing clear rules, policies and procedures prohibiting all forms of violence and discrimination in the workplace, including workplace bullying;
- creating awareness of workplace bullying and procedures to follow in case of incidents; and
- education and training on policies, procedures and practices to follow in reporting bullying incidents.

### **Recommendation 2:**

The designing and the redesigning of the working environment play an extremely important role in the combatting of workplace bullying. Work design refers to how work is structured, enacted, experienced and organised in the working environment. It is recommended that managers consider the following practices to prevent bullying in the working environment:

- Clearly define job requirements and responsibilities.
- Seek regular feedback from employees regarding their work circumstances.
- Provide employees with the necessary information, training and resources to carry out their duties effectively and safely.
- Review and monitor workloads and staffing levels to ensure that excessive working hours are reduced and regulated.
- Provide employees with support mechanisms such as employee assistance programmes, specifically during stressful work periods.

**Recommendation 3:**

Conflict in the working environment is inevitable and as a result it is important that systems, procedures and qualified people such as human resource managers and safety officers be in place to effectively and timely handle instances of bullying in the working environment. It is recommended that a conflict management and resolution system be put in place to deal with conflict in the working environment before it becomes unmanageable.

**Recommendation 4:**

As leadership and management are often the perpetrators of workplace bullying in higher education institutions, it is strongly recommended that changes be made in leadership as well as leadership behaviour in this regard. Destructive leadership can be understood as a style of leadership that promotes poor work performance and incompetence and can lead to workplace bullying if left unattended. Destructive leadership and poor management skills can lead to managers bullying employees or management allowing bullying to be tolerated in the workplace. It is recommended that higher education institutions strive towards promoting constructive management in working environments by providing regular training and education opportunities to empower leaders to effectively manage their workforces.

**Recommendation 5:**

The implementation and operationalisation of policies, rules and procedures are of utmost importance to effectively combat and address bullying in working environments.

**Recommendation 6:**

Creating awareness of workplace bullying is important to foster an anti-bullying culture in working environments. Awareness programmes include rooted information and attitude campaigns aimed at keeping the employers and employees of organisations informed about the acts that constitute bullying, the dangers posed by the phenomenon if left untreated, policies in place to protect them, reporting procedures, supporting facilities available to assist victims in dealing with workplace bullying, etc.

**Recommendation 7:**

Staff selection systems such as psychological testing and reference checking to pre-screen new applicants might be considered; however, this should be used with caution, as the potential for adverse impacts and unfairness may have negative consequences.

#### **Recommendation 8:**

Informal (e.g. separating the bully and the target, coaching and mediation) and formal (e.g. written warnings, withdrawal of supervisory responsibilities, demotions and dismissal) secondary and tertiary (e.g. counselling and debriefing, integrated counselling programmes, inpatient treatment, and physiotherapy and physical exercise) intervention measures should be developed and implemented to counter workplace bullying and the effects thereof effectively and timely.

#### **Recommendation 9:**

It is important that employees of an organisation feel that they are being taken seriously and are protected by their organisation and management. Higher education institutions should strive to ensure that employees who fall victim to workplace bullying are taken seriously and that they feel comfortable reporting falling victim thereto.

### **5.3 AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH**

The following future studies could be conducted to further the understanding of bullying in work contexts:

- This study was conducted at one higher education institution in South Africa. Similar studies could be conducted at other higher education institutions in South Africa to create a better understanding of the experiences of workplace bullying in the higher education context in the country.
- A comparative study could be conducted between different types of higher education institutions to further the research that is available on the phenomenon.
- Comparative studies could be done between South Africa and other countries across the world in order to further the global perspective on workplace bullying behaviour across higher education institutions.
- Studies could be done focusing on the efficiency and efficacy of prevention and intervention measures in place to counter workplace bullying in higher education institutions.

- Additional socio-demographic variables could be identified and investigated to determine the association between these variables and the experiences of workplace bullying, specifically in the context of higher education.
- From a legislative point of view, more could be done to protect victims of specifically workplace bullying.

## **5.4 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The literature that was consulted throughout the study indicated that there are limited research and literature available regarding the workplace bullying phenomenon in higher education institutions of South Africa. The study's main objective was to determine the perceptions of workplace bullying among academic and support staff in a higher education institution in South Africa. In order to achieve and support the primary objective, four chapters were presented.

The first chapter provided an introductory overview of the study. The chapter presented the research problem, questions and objectives, and outlined the methodology followed to achieve the specific research objectives. The chapter also attended to the ethical considerations and discussed the limitations and significance of the study.

The second chapter provided the theoretical background to the workplace bullying phenomenon. The chapter defined and conceptualised workplace bullying and related key concepts. Furthermore, it discussed four theoretical approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon from a theoretical viewpoint. In addition, the chapter focused on the different forms of workplace bullying, the characteristics that make up the perpetrators and victims thereof, as well as the possible antecedents that may cause the phenomenon to occur. The chapter also provided a global and national perspective on the prevalence of workplace bullying, followed by a discussion of the nature and extent of workplace bullying in higher education institutions. The chapter was concluded by discussing the association between selected socio-demographic variables and workplace bullying.

The third chapter provided a discussion of the legislative response as well as possible intervention measures to be taken against workplace bullying behaviour in the working environment. The chapter investigated the possible legislative frameworks that can be used within the South African context to combat workplace bullying successfully. Furthermore, the chapter discussed primary,

secondary and tertiary intervention measures that can be used by organisations in attempts to combat and deal with workplace bullying.

The fourth chapter presented the empirical results and findings of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. It also interpreted and discussed the empirical results and findings of the study against the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3.

This chapter (Chapter 5) concluded the study and presented and discussed the main conclusions and findings of the study against the research objectives stated in Chapter 1. It also provided practical recommendations to be implemented by higher education institutions as well as recommendations for future research.

## LIST OF SOURCES

Adera, R.B. 2017. *The impacts of workplace bullying on organizational climate*. Washington, MD: University of Maryland University College. (Dissertation – PhD).

AFT Legal. 2021. *Written warnings in workplaces: legal recourse*. <https://www.aft.legal/written-warnings-in-the-workplace> Date of access: 28 May. 2021.

Ågotnes, K.W., Einarsen, S.V., Hetland, J. and Skogstad, A. 2018. The moderating effect of laissez-faire leadership on the relationship between co-worker conflicts and new cases of workplace bullying: A true prospective design. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 28(4):555-568.

Akhtar, M.W., Ghufuran, H. & Fatima, T. 2017. The effect of emotional intelligence on turnover intentions: the role of employee well-being, engagement and perceived organisational support. *Jinnah Business Review*, 5(2):69–80.

An, Y. & Kang, J. 2016. Relationship between organizational culture and workplace bullying among Korean nurses. *Asian Nursing Research*, 10(3):234–239.

Apaydin, Ç. 2012. Relationship between workplace bullying and organizational cynicism in Turkish public universities. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(34):9649-9657.

Arbuckle, J.L. 2011. *IBM SPSS Amos 20 user's guide*. Florida: Amos Development Corporation.

Ariza-Montes, A., Arjona-Fuentes, J.M., Law, R. & Han, H. 2017. Incidence of workplace bullying among hospitality employees. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 4(29):1116-1132.

Arseneault, L., Bowes, L. & Shakoor, S. 2010. Bullying victimization in youths and mental health problems: 'much ado about nothing'? *Psychological Medicine*, 40(5):717–729.

Attride-Stirling, J. 2001. Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3):385–405.

Australian Human Rights Commission. 2015. *Background paper: human rights in cyberspace*. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/background-paper-human-rights-cyberspace/1-background-and-context> Date of access: 13 Aug. 2016.

Awai, N.S., Ganasegeran, K. & Manaf, M.R.A. 2021. Prevalence of workplace bullying and its associated factors among workers in a Malaysian public university hospital: a cross-sectional study. *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy*, 14:75-85.

Babbie, E. 2013. *The practice of social research*. Cengage: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2004. *The practice of social research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baillien, E., De Cuyper, N. & De Witte, H. 2011. Job autonomy and workload as antecedents of workplace bullying: a two-wave test of Karasek's job demand control model for targets and perpetrators. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(1):191–208.

Baillien, E., Neyens, I., De Witte, H. & De Cuyper, N. 2009. Towards a three way model of workplace bullying: a qualitative study. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 19(1):1–16.

Baillien, E., Notelaers, G., De Witte, H. & Matthiesen, S.B. 2011. The relationship between the work unit's conflict management styles and bullying at work: moderation by conflict frequency. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 32:401–419.

Bartlett, J.E. & Bartlett, M.E. 2011. Workplace bullying: an integrative literature review. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 13(1):69–84.

Beale, D. & Hoel, H. 2011. Workplace bullying and the employment relationship: exploring questions of prevention, control and context. *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(1):5–18.

Becker, S., Bryman, A. & Ferguson, H. 2012. *Understanding research for social policy and social work: themes, methods and approaches*. Leicester: Policy Press.

Begley, T.M., Lee, C. & Hui, C. 2006. Organizational level as a moderator of the relationship between justice perceptions and work-related reactions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(6):705–721.

Bentley, T.J. 1996. *Bridging the performance gap*. London: Gower.

Berthelsen, M., Skogstad, A., Lau, B. & Einarsen, S. 2011. Do they stay or do they go? A longitudinal study of intentions to leave and exclusion from working life among targets of workplace bullying. *International Journal of Manpower*, 32(2):178–193.

Bilton, T., Bonnett, K., Jones, P., Skinner, D., Stanworth, M. & Webster, A. 2002. *Introductory sociology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bingham, L.B. & Nabatchi, T. 2003. Dispute system design in organizations. In: Pammer, W.J. & Killian, J., eds. *Handbook of Conflict Management*. New York: CRC Press. pp. 105-128.

Blunch, N.J. 2008. *Introduction to structural equation modelling using SPSS and AMOS*. London: Sage.

Bond, S.A., Tuckey, M.R. & Dollard, M.F. 2010. Psychosocial safety climate, workplace bullying, and symptoms of posttraumatic stress. *Organization Development Journal*, 28(1):37–56.

Botha, D. 2019. Employees' perceptions and experiences of bullying in the workplace. *Journal of Contemporary Management*, 16(1):180–208.

Bowling, N.A. & Beehr, T.A. 2006. Workplace harassment from the victim's perspective: a theoretical model and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5):998–1008.

Bowling, N.A., Beehr, T.A., Bennett, M.M. & Watson, C.P. 2010. Target personality and workplace victimization: a prospective analysis. *Work & Stress*, 24(2):140–158.

Bradley, B.H., Postlethwaite, B.E., Klotz, A.C., Hamdani, M.R. & Brown, K.G. 2012. Reaping the benefits of task conflict in teams: the critical role of team psychological safety climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(1):151-158.

Branch, S. & Murray, J. 2015. Workplace bullying: is lack of understanding the reason for inaction. *Organizational Dynamics*, 44(4):287–295.

Branch, S., Ramsay, S. & Barker, M. 2013. Workplace bullying, mobbing and general harassment: a review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(3):280–299.

Bristow, C. 2016. *Cyber bullying and the workplace*. <http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=9289b8fc-3cd5-4827-8d90-bc05c8c60fd4> Date of access: 18 Aug. 2017.

Brodsky, C.M. 1976. *The harassed worker*. Toronto: Lexington Books.

Brubaker, D., Noble, C., Fincher, R., Park, S.K.Y. & Press, S. 2014. Conflict resolution in the workplace: what will the future bring? *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 31(4):357–386.

Bryman, A. 2012. *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burke, I. & Mouton, F. 2013. *An investigation of the current state of mobile device management within South Africa*. Paper presented at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Pretoria, 23 March.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francois\\_Mouton/publication/260012344\\_An\\_Investigation\\_of\\_the\\_Current\\_State\\_of\\_Mobile\\_Device\\_Management\\_Within\\_South\\_Africa/links/0deec52f0d246dbd49000000.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francois_Mouton/publication/260012344_An_Investigation_of_the_Current_State_of_Mobile_Device_Management_Within_South_Africa/links/0deec52f0d246dbd49000000.pdf) Date of access: 2 Feb. 2018.

Burns, W.A. 2017. A descriptive literature review of harmful leadership styles: definitions, commonalities, measurements, negative impacts, and ways to improve these harmful leadership styles. *Creighton Journal of Interdisciplinary Leadership*, 3(1):33–52.

Cambridge University. 2013. *Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Campbell, C.M. 1995. The social identity of township youth: an extension of social identity theory (Part 1). *South African Journal of Psychology*, 25(3):150–159.

Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2013. *What is harassment?* <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/about-human-rights/what-harassment> Date of access: 22 Jun. 2018.

Caponecchia, C. & Wyatt, A. 2009. Distinguishing between workplace bullying, harassment and violence: a risk management approach. *Journal of Occupational Health and Safety, Australia and New Zealand*, 25(6):439–449.

Carden, L.L. & Boyd, R.O. 2010. Workplace bullying: an ethical context applying duty and outcome based approaches to human resource functions. *Southern Journal of Business and Ethics*, 2:144-155.

Catley, B., Bentley, T., Forsyth, D., Cooper-Thomas, H., Gardner, D., O'Driscoll, M. & Trenberth, L. 2013. Managing workplace bullying in New Zealand: perspectives from occupational health and safety practitioners. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 19(5):598-612.

Chan, C.M.H., Wong, J.E., Yeap, L.L.L., Wee, L.H., Jamil, N.A. & Nantha, Y.S. 2019. Workplace bullying and psychological distress of employees across socioeconomic strata: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 19(4):1–8.

Cheng, F.K. 2015. Mediation skills for conflict resolution in nursing education. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 15(4):310–313.

Chirilă, T. & Constantin, T. 2013. Understanding workplace bullying phenomenon through its concepts: a literature review. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84:1175–1179.

Christensen, L. 2019. 'Beware the psychopath boss'. *The Mail & Guardian*, 5 Jul. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-07-05-00-beware-the-psychopath-boss> Date of access: 2 Oct. 2019.

Ciby, M. & Raya, R.P. 2014. Exploring victims' experiences of workplace bullying: a grounded theory approach. *Vikalpa*, 39(2):69–82.

Claybourn, M. 2011. Relationships between moral disengagement, work characteristics and workplace harassment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 100(2):283–301.

Cohen, S., Underwood, L.G. & Gottlieb, B.H., eds. 2000. *Social support measurement and intervention: a guide for health and social scientists*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cohen-Charash, Y. & Spector, P.E. 2001. The role of justice in organizations: a meta-analysis. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 86(2):278–321.

Collins Dictionary. 2020. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com> Date of access: 11 Apr. 2020.

Constantinescu, V. 2014. Mobbing: psychological terror in the workplace. *AFASES*, 2:511–514.

Cooper, J., Giousmpasoglou, C. & Marinakou, E. 2017. Occupational identity and culture: the case of Michelin-starred chefs. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(5):1362-1379.

Crawshaw, L. 2009. Workplace bullying? Mobbing? Harassment? Distraction by a thousand definitions. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61(3):263–267.

Creswell, J.W. 2014. *Research design: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach*. 4th ed. London: Sage.

Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark, V.L., Gutmann, M.L. & Hanson, W.E. 2003. Advanced mixed methods research designs. In: Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C.B., eds. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. London: Sage publications. pp. 209-240.

Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. 2017. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Available from Wiley Online Library: <https://doc1.bibliothek.li/acd/FLMF050277.pdf> Date of access: 22 Nov. 2020.

Crewson, P. 2006. *Applied statistics handbook*. <https://www.isibang.ac.in/~library/onlinez/resources/Stathandbookexample.pdf> Date of access: 22 Nov. 2020.

Crimp, H. 2017. *Insights into effective interventions for the prevention and management of workplace bullying in the New Zealand public service*. Kelburn: Victoria University of Wellington. (Thesis – MA).

Crosslin, K. & Golman, M. 2014. “Maybe you don’t want to face it”: college students’ perspectives on cyberbullying. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 41(1):14–20.

Cunniff, L. & Mostert, K. 2012. Prevalence of workplace bullying of South African employees. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 10(1):1–15.

Dalton, C.M. 2007. The bully down the hall. *Business Horizons*, 50(2):89–91.

Darby, M. 2019. NGO ignored warnings about bullying boss, before and after tragedy. *Climate Home News*, 28 Mar. <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2019/03/28/ngo-ignored-warnings-bullying-boss-tragedy/> Date of access: 2 Oct. 2019.

Davenport, P.M. 2014. *Educators’ perspectives on having been cyber harassed: a phenomenological study*. Lynchburg: Liberty University. (Thesis – PhD).

D’Cruz, P., Mulder, R., Noronha, E., Beerepoot, N. & Magala, S. 2019. The changing role of the nation-state and regulation: workplace bullying legislation in the Netherlands. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 30(1):77–98.

D’Cruz, P. & Noronha, E. 2010. Protecting my interests: HRM and targets’ coping with workplace bullying. *Qualitative Report*, 15(3):507–534.

D’Cruz, P. & Noronha, E. 2011. The limits to workplace friendship: managerialist HRM and bystander behaviour in the context of workplace bullying. *Employee Relations*, 33(3):269–288.

D’Cruz, P. & Noronha, E. 2013. Navigating the extended reach: target experiences of cyberbullying at work. *Information and Organization*, 23(4):324–343.

D'Cruz, P. & Noronha, E. 2018. Target experiences of workplace bullying on online labour markets. *Employee Relations*, 40(1):139-154.

Department of Agriculture. 2020. *Apply basic human resource management principles and practices applicable in an agricultural environment*. [https://www.agriseta.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/116160\\_AG.pdf](https://www.agriseta.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/116160_AG.pdf) Date of access: 22 Nov .2021.

Department of Justice. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/SACConstitution-web-eng.pdf> Date of access: 17 Mar. 2020.

Department of Justice. 2020. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/chp02.html> Date of access: 22 Nov. 2020.

Department of Labour. 2010. *Employment equity reports*. <http://www.labour.gov.za/documents/forms/employment-equity/form-eea2-employment-equity-report> Date of access: 1 Nov. 2018.

Department of Labour. 2020. *The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993*. <https://www.labourguide.co.za/workshop/1547-compensation-for-injury-and-occupational-diseases-act-130-of-1993-coida/file> Date of access: 1 Apr. 2020.

De Stefano, V. 2016. The rise of the just-in-time workforce: on-demand work, crowdwork, and labor protection in the gig-economy. *Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal*, 37(3):461–471.

De Wet, C. & Jacobs, L. 2013. South African teachers' exposure to workplace bullying. *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 9(3):446–464.

Dixon, J. & Dixon, M. 2010. *Confirmatory factor analysis*. Amsterdam: Springer.

Dollard, M.F. & Bakker, A.B. 2010. Psychosocial safety climate as a precursor to conducive work environments, psychological health problems, and employee engagement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(3):579–599.

Dollard, M.F., Dormann, C. & Idris, M.A., eds. 2019. *Psychosocial safety climate: A new work stress theory and implications for method*. New York: Springer Nature.

Dollard, M.F., Dormann, C., Tuckey, M.R. & Escartín, J. 2017. Psychosocial safety climate (PSC) and enacted PSC for workplace bullying and psychological health problem reduction. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 26(6):844-857.

Dollard, M.F. & Karasek, R.A. 2010. Building psychosocial safety climate. *Contemporary occupational health psychology: global perspectives on research and practice*, 1:208–233.

Donegan, R. 2012. Bullying and cyberbullying: history, statistics, law, prevention and analysis. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 3(1):33–42.

Duffy, M. & Sperry, L. 2014. *Overcoming mobbing: a recovery guide for workplace aggression and bullying*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Du Plessis, J.V. & Fouché, M.A. 2012. *A practical guide to labour law*. Durban: LexisNexis.

Dzurec, L.C., Fitzgerald, S.M., Bromley, G.E., Meyers, T.W. & Karpinski, A.C. 2013. Adequacy of sample workplace bullying policy: results of a mixed-methods systematic review. [https://sigma.nursingrepository.org/bitstream/handle/10755/304391/Dzurec\\_AdequacyofaSample.pdf?sequence=1](https://sigma.nursingrepository.org/bitstream/handle/10755/304391/Dzurec_AdequacyofaSample.pdf?sequence=1) Date of access: 22 Nov. 2021.

Einarsen, K., Mykletun, R.J., Einarsen, S.V., Skogstad, A. & Salin, D. 2017. Ethical infrastructure and successful handling of workplace bullying. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 7:37-54.

Einarsen, S. 1999. The nature and causes of bullying at work. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20(1/2):16–27.

Einarsen, S. 2000. Bullying and harassment at work: unveiling an organizational taboo. In: Sheehan, M., Ramsay, S. & Patrick, J., eds. *Proceedings of the Transcending Boundaries Conference*. Brisbane: Griffith University Press. pp. 7–13.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. & Cooper, C., eds. 2002. *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: international perspectives in research and practice*. London: CRC Press.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. & Notelaers, G. 2009. Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised. *Work & stress*, 23(1):24-44.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C. 2004. The concept of bullying at work: the European tradition. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. & Cooper, C., eds. *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: international perspectives in research and practice*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 16–30.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C. 2011. The concept of bullying and harassment at work: the European tradition. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. & Cooper, C., eds. *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: international perspectives in research and practice*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 16–30.

Einarsen, S. & Skogstad, A. 1996. Bullying at work: epidemiological findings in public and private organizations. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5(2):185–201.

Einarsen, S.V., Skogstad, A. & Aasland, M.S. 2017. Destructive leadership. In: Poff, D. & Michalos, A., eds. *Encyclopedia of Business and Professional Ethics*. Cham: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23514-1\\_54-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23514-1_54-1)

Eiselen, R. & Uys, T. 2016. *Analysing survey data using SPSS version 22*. 5th ed. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J. & Lynch, P. 1997. Perceived organizational support, discretionary treatment and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(5):812–820.

Espelage, D.L., Hong, J.S., Merrin, G.J., Davis, J.P., Rose, C.A. & Little, T.D. 2018. A longitudinal examination of homophobic name-calling in middle school: bullying, traditional masculinity, and sexual harassment as predictors. *Psychology of Violence*, 8(1):57-66.

Fair Work Commission. 2021. *Unfair dismissal benchbook: an overview of legal procedures and case law*. <https://www.fwc.gov.au/unfair-dismissals-benchbook/what-is-dismissal> Date of access: 28 May. 2021.

Faucher, C., Cassidy, W. & Jackson, M. 2015. From the sandbox to the inbox: comparing the acts, impacts, and solutions of bullying in K-12, higher education, and the workplace. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3(6):111–125.

Ferris, P.A. 2009. The role of the consulting psychologist in the prevention, detection, and correction of bullying and mobbing in the workplace. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61(3):169-189.

Ferris, P.A., Deakin, R. & Mathieson, S. 2021. Workplace bullying policies: a review of best practices and research on effectiveness. In: D'Cruz, P., Noronha, E., Caponecchia, C. & Escartin, J., eds. *Dignity and inclusion at work*. Singapore: Springer. pp. 59–84.

Field, A. 2005. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Fisher, R.J. 1972. Third party consultation: a method for the study and resolution of conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 16(1):67–94.

Fodchuk, K.M. 2007. Work environments that negate counterproductive behaviors and foster organizational citizenship: research-based recommendations for managers. *Psychologist Manager Journal*, 10(1):27–46.

Fontes, K.B., Alarcão, A.C.J., Santana, R.G., Pelloso, S.M. & De Barros Carvalho, M.D. 2019. Relationship between leadership, bullying in the workplace and turnover intention among nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 27(3):535–542.

Fornés, J., Cardoso, M., Castelló, J.M. & Gili, M. 2011. Psychological harassment in the nursing workplace: an observational study. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 25(3):185–194.

Foucault, M. 1982. The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4):777–795.

Fox, S. & Stallworth, L.E. 2009. Building a framework for two internal organizational approaches to resolving and preventing workplace bullying: alternative dispute resolution and training. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61(3):220-241.

Fox, W. 2007. *A guide to managing research*. Cape Town: Juta.

Galanaki, E. & Papalexandris, N. 2013. Measuring workplace bullying in organisations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(11):2107–2130.

Galang, M. & Jones, S. 2016. Keeping a distance: social identity, workplace bullying, and job satisfaction. *Social Psychological Review*, 18:31-38.

Georgakopoulos, A., Wilkin, L. & Kent, B. 2011. Workplace bullying: a complex problem in contemporary organizations. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(3):1–20.

George, A. 2007. Mediation: the preferred alternative for conflict resolution. <https://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/conflict-amoh.html> Date of access: 22 Jun. 2020.

Gerald, B. 2018. A brief review of independent, dependent and one sample t-test. *International Journal of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics*, 4(2):50-54.

Giga, S.I., Hoel, H. & Lewis, D. 2008. *The costs of workplace bullying*. Manchester: Institute of Science and Technology, University of Manchester.

Gilin Oore, D., Leiter, M.P. & LeBlanc, D.E. 2015. Individual and organizational factors promoting successful responses to workplace conflict. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 56(3):301-310.

Gilman, C.C. II. 2015. *Computer-mediated communication in the workplace: problems and solutions*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon. (Thesis – PhD).

Giorgi, G. 2012. Workplace bullying in academia creates a negative work environment: an Italian study. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 24(4):261–275.

Giorgi, G., Ando, M., Arenas, A., Shoss, M.K. & Leon-Perez, J.M. 2013. Exploring personal and organizational determinants of workplace bullying and its prevalence in a Japanese sample. *Psychology of Violence*, 3(2):185-197.

Giorgi, G., Perminienė, M., Montani, F., Fiz-Perez, J., Mucci, N. & Arcangeli, G. 2016. Detrimental effects of workplace bullying: impediment of self-management competence via psychological distress. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(1):art. #60. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00236>

Glabek, M., Matthiesen, S.B., Hetland, J. & Einarsen, S. 2014. Workplace bullying as an antecedent to job insecurity and intention to leave: a 6-month prospective study. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 24(3):255–268.

Glasl, F. 1982. The process of conflict escalation and roles of third parties. In: Bomers, G.B.J. & Peterson, R.B., eds. *Conflict management and industrial relations*. Dordrecht: Springer. pp. 119–140.

Gliem, J.A. & Gliem, R.R. 2003. Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales. Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, Columbus Ohio State University.

González-Rodríguez, G., Colubi, A. & Gil, M.Á. 2012. Fuzzy data treated as functional data: a one-way ANOVA test approach. *Computational Statistics & Data Analysis*, 56(4):943–955.

Graf, W., Kramer, G. & Nicolescu, A. 2010. Complexity thinking as a meta-framework for conflict transformation: in search of a paradigm and a methodology for a transformative culture of peace. In: Viktorija, R. & Wintersteiner, W., eds. *Yearbook peace culture*. Klagenfurt: Drava Verlag. pp. 58–81.

Green, R., Collingwood, A. & Ross, A. 2010. Characteristics of bullying victims in schools. London: Department for Education.

Grogan, J. 2010. *Dismissal*. Cape Town: Juta.

Guillaume, Y.R., Dawson, J.F., Otaye-Ebede, L., Woods, S.A. & West, M.A. 2017. Harnessing demographic differences in organizations: what moderates the effects of workplace diversity? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 38(2):276–303.

Hair, J.R., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. & Black, W.C. 2010. *Multivariate data analysis*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

Halim, H.A.M., Halim, F.W. & Khairuddin, R. 2018. Does personality influence workplace bullying and lead to depression among nurses? *Jurnal Pengurusan (UKM Journal of Management)*, 53:3-12.

Hall, G.B., Dollard, M.F. & Coward, J. 2010. Psychosocial safety climate: development of the PSC-12. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 17(4):353–383.

Hancock, G.R. & Mueller, R.O. 2010. *The reviewer's guide to quantitative methods in the social sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Harrell, T. 2020. *Do we all agree? A mixed-methods study of the impact of climate strength on psychological safety, team learning, and team performance*. San Diego: University of San Diego. (Dissertation – PhD).

Hauge, L.J., Skogstad, A. & Einarsen, S. 2007. Relationships between stressful work environments and workplace bullying: results of a large representative study. *Work & Stress*, 21:220–242.

Hauge, L.J., Skogstad, A. & Einarsen, S. 2010. The relative impact of workplace bullying as a social stressor at work. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 51(5):426–433.

Henson, B. 2010. Preventing interpersonal violence in emergency departments: practical applications of criminology theory. *Violence and Victims*, 25(4):553–565.

Herscovis, M.S., Reich, T.C. & Niven, K. 2015. *Workplace bullying: causes, consequences, and intervention strategies*. London: SIOP White Paper Series.

Himmer, R.P. 2016. *The effect of target demographics and emotional intelligence on workplace bullying*. Minneapolis: Walden University. (Thesis – PhD).

Hoel, H. & Cooper, C.L. 2000. *Destructive conflict and bullying at work*. Manchester: Manchester School of Management, UMIST.

Hoel, H. & Einarsen, S.V. 2020. Investigating complaints of bullying and harassment. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C.L., eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace*. London: CRC Press. pp. 541–561.

Hoel, H., Glasø, L., Hetland, J., Cooper, C.L. & Einarsen, S. 2010. Leadership styles as predictors of self-reported and observed workplace bullying. *British Journal of Management*, 21(2):453–468.

Hollis, L.P. 2015. Bully university? The cost of workplace bullying and employee disengagement in American higher education. *Sage Open*, 5(2):1–11.

Hollis, L.P. 2017a. Evasive actions: the gendered cycle of stress and coping for those enduring workplace bullying in American higher education. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 4(7):59-68.

Hollis, L.P. 2017b. This is why they leave you: workplace bullying and insight to junior faculty departure. *British Journal of Education*, 5(10):1–7.

Hollis, L.P. 2017c. Workplace bullying in the United States and Canada: organizational accountability required in higher education. *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 76(1):116-125.

House, J.S., Robbins, C. & Metzner, H.L. 1982. The association of social relationships and activities with mortality: prospective evidence from the Tecumseh Community Health Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 116(1):123–140.

Howladar, M.H.R., Rahman, S. & Uddin, A. 2018. Deviant workplace behavior and job performance: the moderating effect of transformational leadership. *Iranian Journal of Management Studies*, 11(1):147–183.

Hu, L. & Bentler, P.M. 1999. Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6(1):1–55.

Huddy, L. 2002. Context and meaning in social identity theory: a response to Oakes. *Political Psychology*, 23(4):825–838.

Idris, M.A. & Dollard, M.F. 2011. Psychosocial safety climate, work conditions, and emotions in the workplace: a Malaysian population-based work stress study. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 18(4):324-347.

Idris, M.A. & Dollard, M.F. 2014. Psychosocial safety climate, emotional demands, burnout, and depression: a longitudinal multilevel study in the Malaysian private sector. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 19(3):291-303.

Idris, M.A., Dollard, M.F., Coward, J. & Dormann, C. 2012. Psychosocial safety climate: conceptual distinctiveness and effect on job demands and worker psychological health. *Safety Science*, 50(1):19–28.

Idris, M.A., Dollard, M.F. & Winefield, A.H. 2011. Integrating psychosocial safety climate in the JD-R model: a study amongst Malaysian workers. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37(2):29–39.

ILO (International Labour Organization). 2019. *Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work*. [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C190](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190) Date of access: 25 Mar. 2021.

ILO (International Labour Organization). 2020a. *About the region*. <https://www.ilo.org/africa/about-us/lang--en/index.htm> Date of access: 17 Mar. 2020.

ILO (International Labour Organization). 2020b. *Bullying and sexual harassment in the legal sector*. [https://www.ilo.org/brussels/information-resources/news/WCMS\\_712518/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/brussels/information-resources/news/WCMS_712518/lang--en/index.htm) Date of access: 17 Mar. 2020.

ILO (International Labour Organization). 2020c. *Violence and harassment convention*. [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_I D:3999810](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_I D:3999810) Date of access: 17 Mar. 2020.

Indvik, J. & Johnson, P.R. 2012. Lawsuits walk in on two feet: the bully in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 16(2):63–77.

Ivankova, N.V., Creswell, J.W. & Stick, S.L. 2006. Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field methods*, 18(1):3-20.

Jacobs, L. & De Wet, C. 2015. A quantitative exploration of the effects of workplace bullying on South African educators. *African Safety Promotion: A Journal of Injury and Violence Prevention*, 13(2):31–58.

Jacobs, L. & Teise, K.L. 2019. Educators' subjective experiences of workplace bullying within a perceived neoliberalist education system. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(4):art. #1868. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n4a1868>

Jacobson, K.J., Hood, J.N. & Van Buren, H.J. III. 2014. Workplace bullying across cultures: a research agenda. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 14(1):47–65.

Jenkins, M. 2011. Practice note: is mediation suitable for complaints of workplace bullying? *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 29(1):25–38.

Jha, S. & Jha, S. 2010. Antecedents of interpersonal conflicts at workplace. *Journal of Management & Public Policy*, 1(2):75–80.

Jogulu, U.D. & Pansiri, J. 2011. Mixed methods: a research design for management doctoral dissertations. *Management Research Review*, 34(6):687–701.

Johnson, S.L. 2011. An ecological model of workplace bullying: a guide for intervention and research. *Nursing Forum*, 46(2):55–63.

Johnson, S.L. 2015. Workplace bullying prevention: a critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 71(10):2384–2392.

Jones, C. 2006. Drawing boundaries: exploring the relationship between sexual harassment, gender and bullying. *Women's Studies International Forum*, (29):147–158.

Jones, J.W., Steffy, B.D. & Bray, D.W., eds. 1991. *Applying psychology in business: the handbook for managers and human resource professionals*. Toronto: Lexington Books.

Jones, R.J., Woods, S.A. & Guillaume, Y.R. 2016. The effectiveness of workplace coaching: a meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(2):249–277.

Jordan, T. 2000. *Glasl's nine stage model of conflict escalation*. <http://www.mediate.com/articles/jordan.cfm> Date of access: 22 Nov. 2021.

Kakumba, U., Wamala, R. & Wanyama, S.B. 2014. Employment relations and bullying in academia: a case of academic staff at Makerere University. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 9(1):63–74.

Kalliath, T., Kalliath, P., Tambur, M. & Vadi, M. 2012. Workplace bullying and organizational culture in a post-transitional country. *International Journal of Manpower*, 33(7):754-768.

Kamei, K., Putterman, L. & Tyran, J.R. 2015. State or nature? Endogenous formal versus informal sanctions in the voluntary provision of public goods. *Experimental Economics*, 18(1):38–65.

Keashly, L. & Neuman, J.H. 2010. Faculty experiences with bullying in higher education: causes, consequences, and management. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 32(1):48–70.

Keashly, L. & Nowell, B.L. 2002. Conflict, conflict resolution and bullying. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. & Cooper, C., eds. *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 357–376.

- Keashly, L. & Nowell, B. 2011. Conflict, conflict resolution and bullying. In: Keashly, L., Nowell, B.L., Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C, eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace: developments in theory, research, and practice*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 339–358.
- Kerr, A.W., Hall, H.K. & Kozub, S.A. 2002. *Doing statistics with SPSS*. London: Sage.
- Kivimäki, M., Elovainio, M. & Vahtera, J. 2000. Workplace bullying and sickness absence in hospital staff. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 57(10):656–660.
- Konovsky, M.A. & Pugh, S.D. 1994. Citizenship behavior and social exchange. *Academy of management journal*, 37(3):656-669.
- Kortjan, N. & Von Solms, R. 2014. A conceptual framework for cyber-security awareness and education in SA. *South African Computer Journal*, 52(1):29–41.
- Laerd Statistics. 2021. *Spearman's rank-order correlation*. <https://statistics.laerd.com/statistical-guides/spearmans-rank-order-correlation-statistical-guide.php#:~:text=A%20monotonic%20relationship%20is%20a,the%20other%20variable%20value%20decreases> Date of access: 22 Jun. 2022.
- Lange, S., Burr, H., Conway, P.M. & Rose, U. 2019. Workplace bullying among employees in Germany: prevalence estimates and the role of the perpetrator. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 92(2):237–247.
- Langos, C. 2012. Cyberbullying: the challenge to define. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour, and Social Networking*, 15(6):285–289.
- LaTour, S., Houlden, P., Walker, L. & Thibaut, J. 1976. Some determinants of preference for modes of conflict resolution. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 20(2):319–356.
- Lavrakas, P.J. 2008. *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Law, R., Dollard, M.F., Tuckey, M.R. & Dormann, C. 2011. Psychosocial safety climate as a lead indicator of workplace bullying and harassment, job resources, psychological health and employee engagement. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 43(5):1782–1793.

Leach, L.S., Poyser, C. & Butterworth, P. 2017. Workplace bullying and the association with suicidal ideation/thoughts and behaviour: a systematic review. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 74(1):72–79.

Leech, N.L., Barrett, K.C. & Morgan, G.A. 2005. *SPSS for intermediate statistics: use and interpretation*. UK, Sussex: Psychology Press.

Leo, L., Reid, R., Geldenhuys, M. & Gobind, J. 2014. The inferences of gender in workplace bullying: a conceptual analysis. *Gender and Behaviour*, 12(1):6059–6069.

Leonard, K. 2020. *Differences between destructive & constructive conflict*. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/positive-negative-conflicts-workplace-11422.html> Date of access: 18 May. 2021.

Leon-Perez, J.M., Medina, F.J., Arenas, A. & Munduate, L. 2015. The relationship between interpersonal conflict and workplace bullying. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 30(3):250–263.

Le Roux, R., Rycroft, A. & Orleyn, T. 2010. *Harassment in the workplace: law, policies and processes*. Durban: LexisNexis.

Leymann, H. 1990. Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. *Violence and Victims*, 5(2):119–126.

Leymann, H. 1996. The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5(2):165–184.

Lin, L., Liu, J., Cao, X., Wen, S., Xu, J., Xue, Z. & Lu, J. 2020. Internet addiction mediates the association between cyber victimization and psychological and physical symptoms: moderation by physical exercise. *BMC Psychiatry*, 20:1–8.

Lind, E.A. & Tyler, T.R. 1988. *The social psychology of procedural justice*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Liu, D., Wong, S.W.D. & Roland, E. 2018. The family–school linkage in addressing bullying in Hong Kong: a sociocultural perspective. *Chinese Education & Society*, 51(6):462–475.

Livingstone, S., Stoilova, M. & Kelly, A. 2016. *Cyberbullying: incidence, trends and consequences*.

[http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68079/1/Livingstone\\_Cyberbullying%20incidence%20trends\\_2016.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68079/1/Livingstone_Cyberbullying%20incidence%20trends_2016.pdf)

Date of access: 2 Feb. 2018.

López-Cabarcos, M.Á., Vázquez-Rodríguez, P. & Gieure, C. 2017. Gender and age differences in the psychosocial risk factors of workplace bullying. *Psychology & Marketing*, 34(11):1023–1030.

Lösel, F. & Bender, D. 2014. Aggressive, delinquent, and violent outcomes of school bullying: do family and individual factors have a protective function? *Journal of School Violence*, 13(1):59–79.

Lutgen-Sandvik, P., Namie, G. & Namie, R. 2009. Workplace bullying: causes, consequences, and corrections. In: Lutgen-Sandvik, P. & Davenport Sypher, B., eds. *Destructive organizational communication: processes, consequences & constructive ways of organizing*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 27–52.

MacCurtain, S., Murphy, C., O'Sullivan, M., MacMahon, J. & Turner, T. 2018. To stand back or step in? Exploring the responses of employees who observe workplace bullying. *Nursing Inquiry*, 25(1):e12207.

Madan, A.O. 2014. Cyber aggression/cyber bullying and the dark triad: effect on workplace behavior/performance. *International Journal of Social, Management, Economics and Business Engineering*, 8(6):1725–1730.

Madera, J.M., King, E.B. & Hebl, M.R. 2012. Bringing social identity to work: the influence of manifestation and suppression on perceived discrimination, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 18(2):165-175.

Matthews, M. 2017. *Assessing the use of employment screening for sexual assault prevention*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Matthiesen, S.B. & Bjørkelo. 2011. Workplace bullying: a toxic part of organizational life. In: Burke, R.J., Clarke, S. & Cooper, C.L., eds. *Occupational health and safety*. Cornwall: MPG Books Group. pp. 161–177.

Matthiesen, S.B. & Einarsen, S. 2010. Bullying in the workplace: definition, prevalence, antecedents and consequences. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*, 13(2):202–248.

McAvoy, B.R. & Murtagh, J. 2003. Workplace bullying: the silent epidemic. *BMJ*, 326(7393):776–777.

McDonald, P. 2012. Workplace sexual harassment 30 years on: a review of the literature. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(1):1–17.

McKenzie, D.M. 2015. The role of mediation in resolving workplace relationship conflict. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 39:52–59.

McLeod, S. 2019. *What does effect size tell you?* <https://www.simplypsychology.org/effect-size.html#:~:text=Cohen%20suggested%20that%20d%20%3D%200.2,if%20it%20is%20statistically%20significant> Date of access: 31 Jul. 2021.

Mediation Training Institute. 2021. *Constructive behaviours to manage conflict more effectively*. <https://www.mediationworks.com/constructive/> Date of access: 18 May. 2021.

Miller, K.W., Voas, J. & Hurlburt, G.F. 2012. BYOD: security and privacy considerations. *IT Professional*, 14(5):53–55.

Mills, C.B., Keller, M., Chilcutt, A. & Nelson, M.D. 2019. No laughing matter: workplace bullying, humor orientation, and leadership styles. *Workplace Health & Safety*, 67(4):159–167.

Mishra, P., Pandey, C.M., Singh, U., Gupta, A., Sahu, C. & Keshri, A. 2019. Descriptive statistics and normality tests for statistical data. *Annals of Cardiac Anaesthesia*, 22(1):67-72.

Mitchell, A., Ahmed, A. & Szabo, C. 2014. Workplace violence among nurses, why are we still discussing this? Literature review. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 4(4):147–150.

Mistelis, L & Baltag, C. 2008. Recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards and settlement in international arbitration: corporate attitudes and practices. *The American Review of International Arbitration*, 19:320-373.

Momberg, M.A. 2011. *The prevalence and consequences of workplace bullying in South Africa*. PE, Summerstrand: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. (Dissertation – PhD).

Moreno-Jiménez, B., Rodríguez-Muñoz, A., Salin, D. & Morante, M.E. 2008. Workplace bullying in southern Europe: prevalence, forms and risk groups in a Spanish sample. *International Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 13(2):95–109.

Morgeson, F.P. & Humphrey, S.E. 2008. Job and team design: toward a more integrative conceptualization of work design. In: Martocchio, J.J., ed. *Research in personnel and human resources management*. Illinois: Emerald Group. pp. 39–91.

Mueller, R.O. 1996. *Basic principles of structural equation modeling: an introduction to LISREL and EQS*. New York, NY: Springer.

Mulder, R., Pouwelse, M., Lodewijkx, H. & Bolman, C. 2014. Workplace mobbing and bystanders' helping behaviour towards victims: the role of gender, perceived responsibility and anticipated stigma by association. *International Journal of Psychology*, 49(4):304–312.

Mvorganizing.org. 2021. *What is the effect size in SPSS*. <https://www.mvorganizing.org/what-is-effect-size-in-spss/> Date of access: 22 Jun. 2021.

Mwenze, H.N. 2018. *Effects of work place counseling on organizational performance: a case study of Agility Global Logistic Kenya*. Nairobi: Management University of Africa. (Dissertation – PhD).

Namie, G. & Namie, R. 2009. US workplace bullying: some basic considerations and consultation interventions. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61(3):202-219.

Namie, G. & Namie, R. 2018. Risk factors for becoming a target of workplace bullying and mobbing. In: Duffy, M. & Yamada, D.C., eds. *Workplace bullying and mobbing in the United States*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clío. pp. 53–74.

Nel, E.C. 2019. The impact of workplace bullying on flourishing: the moderating role of emotional intelligence. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 45(1):1–9.

Nguyen, D.T., Teo, S.T., Grover, S.L. & Nguyen, N.P. 2017. Psychological safety climate and workplace bullying in Vietnam's public sector. *Public Management Review*, 19(10):1415–1436.

Ngwane, K.S. 2018. Workplace harassment and its impact on staff performance: a case study of a South African higher education institution. *Journal of Management & Administration*, 2018(2):163–189.

Niedhammer, I., David, S. & Degioanni, S. 2007. Economic activities and occupations at high risk for workplace bullying: results from a large-scale cross-sectional survey in the general working population in France. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 80(4):346–353.

Nielsen, M.B. & Einarsen, S.V. 2018. What we know, what we do not know, and what we should and could have known about workplace bullying: an overview of the literature and agenda for future research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 42:71–83.

Nielsen, M.B., Matthiesen, S.B. & Einarsen, S. 2010. The impact of methodological moderators on prevalence rates of workplace bullying: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(4):955–979.

Nordlund, A.M. & Garvill, J. 2002. Value structures behind proenvironmental behavior. *Environment and behavior*, 34(6):740-756.

Notelaers, G., Törnroos, M. & Salin, D. 2019. Effort-reward imbalance: a risk factor for exposure to workplace bullying. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10:386-391.

Notelaers, G., Van der Heijden, B., Guenter, H., Nielsen, M.B. & Einarsen, S.V. 2018. Do interpersonal conflict, aggression and bullying at the workplace overlap? A latent class modeling approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9:1743–1757.

Notelaers, G., Vermunt, J.K., Baillien, E., Einarsen, S. & De Witte, H. 2010. Exploring risk groups and risk factors for workplace bullying. *Industrial Health*, 49:73-88.

NWU (North-West University). 2016. *Policy and Rules for Research Ethics*. [http://services.nwu.ac.za/sites/services.nwu.ac.za/files/files/research-support/documents/9P-9.1.5\\_Policy%20of%20research%20ethics\\_eng1.pdf](http://services.nwu.ac.za/sites/services.nwu.ac.za/files/files/research-support/documents/9P-9.1.5_Policy%20of%20research%20ethics_eng1.pdf) Date of access: 2 Sep. 2021.

Oladapo, V. & Banks, L.T. 2013. Management bullies: the effect on employees. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 4(4):107–120.

Ormston, R., Spencer, L., Barnard, M. & Snape, D. 2014. *The foundations of qualitative research*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Owoyemi, O.A. 2011. Exploring workplace bullying in an emergency service organisation in the UK. *International journal of business management*, 6(3): 63-80.

Pallant, J. 2016. *SPSS survival manual: a step by step guide to data analysis using IBM statistics*. Berkshire: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education.

Paron-Wildes, A.J. & Simoneaux, C. 2019. *Designing offices where privacy doesn't compromise safety*. <https://hbr.org/2019/06/designing-offices-where-privacy-doesnt-compromise-safety> Date of access: 16 May. 2021.

Parzefall, M.R. & Salin, D.M. 2010. Perceptions of and reactions to workplace bullying: a social exchange perspective. *Human Relations*, 63(6):761–780.

Philippot, A., Bleyenheuft, Y. & De Volder, A. 2021. Effect of physical exercise training on bullying and depression in a classroom: a case report. *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine*, 6(1):1-16.

Pilch, I. & Turska, E. 2015. Relationships between Machiavellianism, organizational culture, and workplace bullying: emotional abuse from the target's and the perpetrator's perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 128(1):83–93.

Piotrowski, C. 2012. From workplace bullying to cyberbullying: the enigma of e-harassment in modern organizations. *Development Journal*, 30(4):44–53.

Post, M., Storey, K., Haymes, L., Campbell, C. & Loughrey, T. 2014. Stalking behaviors by individuals with autism spectrum disorders in employment settings: understanding stalking behavior and developing appropriate supports. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 49:102–110.

Puth, M.T., Neuhäuser, M. & Ruxton, G.D. 2015. Effective use of Spearman's and Kendall's correlation coefficients for association between two measured traits. *Animal Behaviour*, 102:77-84.

Rai, A. & Agarwal, U.A. 2018. A review of literature on mediators and moderators of workplace bullying. *Management Research Review*, 41(7):822-859.

Ramjettan, D. 2020. Draft code of practice on workplace violence and harassment published. *Bbrief*, 21 Sept. <https://www.bbrief.co.za/2020/09/21/draft-code-of-practice-on-workplace-violence-and-harassment-published/> Date of access: 24 Sep. 2020.

Ramsay, S., Troth, A. & Branch, S. 2011. Work-place bullying: a group processes framework. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(4):799–816.

Ray, S.L. 2006. Whistleblowing and organizational ethics. *Nursing ethics*, 13(4):438-445.

Rayner, C. & Lewis, D. 2011. Managing workplace bullying: the role of policies. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C.L., eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace: developments in theory, research, and practice*. 2nd ed. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press. pp. 327–340.

Regmi, P.R., Waithaka, E., Paudyal, A., Simkhada, P. & Van Teijlingen, E. 2016. Guide to the design and application of online questionnaire surveys. *Nepal journal of epidemiology*, 6(4):640-644.

Rice, M.E. & Harris, G.T. 2005. Comparing effect sizes in follow-up studies: ROC area, Cohen's d, and r. *Law and Human Behavior*, 29(5):615-620.

Richards, J. & Daley, H. 2004. Bullying policy: development, implementation and monitoring. In: Eienarsem, S. & Hoel, H., eds. *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: international perspectives in research and practice*. London: Taylor & Francis. pp. 247–278.

Roche, W.K. 2016. The development of conflict resolution practices in Irish workplaces. *Administration*, 64(3/4):61–89.

Rodríguez-Muñoz, A., Baillien, E., De Witte, H., Moreno-Jimenez, B. & Pastor, J.C. 2009. Cross-lagged relationships between workplace bullying, job satisfaction and engagement: two longitudinal studies. *Work & Stress*, 23(3):225–243.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1993a. The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993. *Government Gazette*, 15271, 26 Nov.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1993b. The Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993. *Government Gazette*, 14918, 2 Jul.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1995. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. *Government Gazette*, 1877, 13 Dec.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1997. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997. *Government Gazette*, 18491, 5 Dec.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1998. The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. *Government Gazette*, 19370, 19 Oct.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 2000. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000. *Government Gazette*, 20876, 9 Feb.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 2001. The Unemployment Insurance Act 63 of 2001. *Government Gazette*, 23064, 28 Jan.

RSA (Republic of South Africa). 2020. Draft Code of Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. *Government Gazette*, 896, 20 Aug.

Safe Work Australia. 2016. *Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Salin, D. 2003a. Bullying and organisational politics in competitive and rapidly changing work environments. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making*, 4(1):35–46.

Salin, D. 2003b. *Workplace bullying among business professionals: prevalence, organisational antecedents and gender differences*. Helsinki: Svenska handelshögskolan.

Salin, D. 2008a. Organisational responses to workplace harassment: an exploratory study. *Personnel Review*, 38(1):26–44.

Salin, D. 2008b. The prevention of workplace bullying as a question of human resource management: measures adopted and underlying organizational factors. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 24(3):221–231.

Salin, D. 2013. Ethics training and the prevention of workplace bullying: creating a healthy work environment. In: Sekerka, L.E., ed. *Ethics training in action: an examination of issues, techniques, and development*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age. pp. 103–119.

Salin, D. 2021. (in press). Workplace bullying and gender: an overview of empirical findings. In: D'Cruz, P., Noronha, E., Caponecchio, C., Escartin, J., Salin, D. & Tuckey, M., eds. *Workplace bullying: dignity and inclusion at work*. Singapore: Springer.

Salin, D., Cowan, R., Adewumi, O., Apospori, E., Bochantin, J., D'Cruz, P., Djurkovic, N., Durniat, K., Escartín, J., Guo, J. & Işik, I. 2019. Workplace bullying across the globe: a cross-cultural comparison. *Personnel Review*, 48:204-219.

Salin, D., Cowan, R.L., Adewumi, O., Apospori, E., Bochantin, J., D'Cruz, P., Djurkovic, N., Durniat, K., Escartín, J., Guo, J. & Işik, I. 2018. Prevention of and interventions in workplace bullying: a global study of human resource professionals' reflections on preferred action. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29(22):1-23.

Salin, D. & Hoel, H. 2013. Workplace bullying as a gendered phenomenon. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 28(3):235-251.

Samnani, A.K. & Singh, P. 2012. 20 years of workplace bullying research: a review of the antecedents and consequences of bullying in the workplace. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17(6):581-589.

Sarantakos, S. 2013. *Social research*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scheepers, D. & Ellemers, N. 2019. Social identity theory. In: Sassenberg, K. & Vliek, M.W.V., eds. *Social psychology in action*. Springer: Cham. pp. 129-143.

Schwickerath, J. & Zapf, D. 2020. Inpatient psychotherapy of bullying victims. In: Einarsen, S.V., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C.L., eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace: theory, research and practice*. UK, Abingdon: CRC press. pp. 593-625.

Scott, A.J. & Kahn, D. 2017. Factors influencing medical students in pursuing a career in surgery: a cross-sectional survey. *South African Journal of Surgery*, 55(2):24-30.

Scott, H.S. 2018. Extending the Duluth model to workplace bullying: a modification and adaptation of the workplace power-control wheel. *Workplace Health & Safety*, 66(9):444-452.

Shadfar, S. & Malekmohammadi, I. 2013. Application of structural equation modeling (SEM) in restructuring state intervention strategies toward paddy production development. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(12):576–618.

Shin, Y. 2010. Psychosocial and friendship characteristics of bully/victim subgroups in Korean primary school children. *School Psychology International*, 31(4):372–388.

Siegrist, J. 1996. Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 1:27–41.

Skogstad, A., Torsheim, T., Einarsen, S. & Hauge, L.J. 2011. Testing the work environment hypothesis of bullying on a group level of analysis: psychosocial factors as precursors of observed workplace bullying. *Applied Psychology*, 60(3):475–495.

Skuzińska, A., Plopa, M. & Plopa, W. 2020. Bullying at work and mental health: the moderating role of demographic and occupational variables. *Advances in Cognitive Psychology*, 16(1):13-23.

Smit, D.M. 2014. *Bullying in the workplace: towards a uniform approach in South African labour law*. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State. (Dissertation – PhD).

Smit, D.M. 2015. Cyberbullying in South African and American schools: a legal comparative study. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(2):1–11.

Smith, F.L. & Coel, C.R. 2018. Workplace bullying policies, higher education and the First Amendment: building bridges not walls. *First Amendment Studies*, 52(1/2):96–111.

Smith-Crowe, K., Tenbrunsel, A.E., Chan-Serafin, S., Brief, A.P., Umphress, E.E. & Joseph, J. 2015. The ethics “fix”: when formal systems make a difference. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 131(4):791–801.

South African Labour Guide. 2020a. *Harassment in the workplace*.  
<https://www.labourguide.co.za/general/374-harassment-in-the-workplace>

Date of access: 24 Mar. 2020.

South African Labour Guide. 2020b. *Occupational injuries and diseases act 130 of 1993*. <https://www.labourguide.co.za/health-and-safety/544-perspectives-on-compensation-for-occupational-injuries> Date of access: 4 Apr. 2020.

South African Labour Guide. 2020c *Workplace bullying: remedies and recourse in South African law*. <https://www.labourguide.co.za/law-firms/werksmans-attorneys/2686-workplace-bullying-remedies-and-recourse-in-south-african-law> Date of access: 1 Apr. 2020.

South African Labour Guide. 2021a. Forms of disciplinary action. <https://www.labourguide.co.za/discipline-dismissal/361-forms-of-disciplinary-action#:~:text=A%20written%20warning%20and%20a,the%20employee%20for%20any%20purpose> Date of access: 12 Jun. 2021.

South African Labour Guide. 2021b. *The code of good practice: dismissal*. <https://www.labourguide.co.za/dismissals1> Date of access: 12 Jun. 2021.

Srabstein, J.C. & Leventhal, B.L. 2010. Prevention of bullying-related morbidity and mortality: a call for public health policies. *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 88(6):403–404.

Steinman, S. 2003. *Workplace violence in the health sector. Country case study: South Africa*. Joint Programme on Workplace Violence in the Health Sector. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Susan-Steinman/publication/237076002\\_Workplace\\_Violence\\_in\\_the\\_Health\\_Sector\\_Country\\_Case\\_Study\\_South\\_Africa/links/0deec51b49f6d4a816000000/Workplace-Violence-in-the-Health-Sector-Country-Case-Study-South-Africa.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Susan-Steinman/publication/237076002_Workplace_Violence_in_the_Health_Sector_Country_Case_Study_South_Africa/links/0deec51b49f6d4a816000000/Workplace-Violence-in-the-Health-Sector-Country-Case-Study-South-Africa.pdf) Date of access: 22 Nov. 2020.

Stuart-Cassel, V., Bell, A. & Springer, J.F. 2011. *Analysis of state bullying laws and policies*. Folsom, CA: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, US Department of Education.

Subedi, D. 2016. Explanatory sequential mixed method design as the third research community of knowledge claim. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 4(7):570-577.

Tajfel, H. 2010. *Social identity and intergroup relations*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Tang, C.L. 2018. *Antecedents of workplace bullying in Malaysia office environment*. Kamper, Perak: UTAR (Dissertation – PhD).

Tehrani, N. 2011. Workplace bullying: the role for counselling. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. & Zapf, C., eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace: developments in theory, research, and practice*. London: CRC Press. pp. 381–396.

Tenbrunsel, A.E., Smith-Crowe, K. & Umphress, E.E. 2003. Building houses on rocks: the role of the ethical infrastructure in organizations. *Social Justice Research*, 16(3):285–307.

Thompson, B. 2019. Sexual harassment and bullying rife in legal profession. *The Financial Times*, 15 May. <https://www.ft.com/content/cf4517ac-7657-11e9-be7d-6d846537acab> Date of access: 2 Oct. 2019.

Thylefors, I. 1987. *Syndabockar: om utstötning och mobbning i arbetslivet. Natur och kultur [Scapegoats: on exclusion and bullying in work life]*. Stockholm: Nature and Culture.

Trochim, W.M.K. 2006. *Web Centre for Social Research Methods*. [https://socialresearchmethods.net/kb/stat\\_t.php](https://socialresearchmethods.net/kb/stat_t.php) Date of access: 3 Apr. 2018.

Urdan, T.C. 2016. *Statistics in plain English*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H. & Bondas, T. 2013. Content analysis and thematic analysis: implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 15(3):398–405.

Valentine, S., Fleischman, G. & Godkin, L. 2015. Rogues in the ranks of selling organizations: using corporate ethics to manage workplace bullying and job satisfaction. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 35(2):143–163.

Van der Nest, A., Long, C. & Engelbrecht, J. 2018. The impact of formative assessment activities on the development of teacher agency in mathematics teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(1):1–10.

Van Selm, M. & Jankowski, N.W. 2006. Conducting online surveys. *Quality and quantity*, 40(3):435-456.

Vartia, M. & Leka, S. 2011. Interventions for the prevention and management of bullying at work. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C.L., eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace: developments in theory, research, and practice*. 2nd ed. UK, Abingdon: CRC Press. pp. 359–379.

Vie, T.L., Glasø, L. & Einarsen, S. 2011. Health outcomes and self-labeling as a victim of workplace bullying. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 70(1):37–43.

Vilas-Boas, M. 2019. Relationship between the perception of organizational culture and ethical climate and the perception of workplace bullying. *CES Psicología*, 12(2):103–125.

Visagie, J.C., Havenga, W., Linde, H. & Botha, A. 2012. The prevalence of workplace bullying in a South African mining company. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 36(2):62–75.

Von, D. 2019. 9 stages of conflict escalation according to Friedrich Glasl. <https://dieprojektmanager.com/9-stages-of-conflict-escalation-according-to-friedrich-glasl/> Date of access: 22 Jun. 2020.

Wang, Y.D. & Hsieh, H.H. 2013. Organizational ethical climate, perceived organizational support, and employee silence: a cross-level investigation. *Human Relations*, 66(6):783–802.

Wärnich, S., Carrel, M.R., Elbert, N.F. & Hatfield, R.D. 2018. *Human resource management in South Africa*. 6th ed. Hampshire: Cengage Learning.

Warren, D.E., Gaspar, J. & Laufer, W.S. 2014. Is formal ethics training merely cosmetic? A study of ethics training and ethical organizational culture. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 24:85-117.

Warszewska-Makuch, M., Bedyńska, S. & Żołnierczyk-Zreda, D. 2015. Authentic leadership, social support and their role in workplace bullying and its mental health consequences. *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*, 21(2):128–140.

Washington, E.T. 2014. *Why did you tweet that? An examination of cyberbullying among undergraduate students at an urban research university*. Memphis, TN: The University of Memphis. (Thesis – PhD).

Weaver, G.R. 1993. Corporate codes of ethics: purpose, process and content issues. *Business & Society*, 32(1):44–58.

Westbrook, J., Sunderland, N., Li, L., Koyama, A., McMullan, R., Urwin, R., Churrua, K., Baysari, M.T., Jones, C., Loh, E. & McInnes, E.C. 2021. The prevalence and impact of unprofessional behaviour among hospital workers: a survey in seven Australian hospitals. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 214(1):31–37.

Westhues, K. 2004. *Workplace mobbing in academe: reports from twenty universities*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Wheeler, A.R., Halbesleben, J.R. & Shanine, K. 2010. Eating their cake and everyone else's cake, too: resources as the main ingredient to workplace bullying. *Business Horizons*, 53(6):553–560.

Whitney, I. & Smith, P.K. 1993. A survey of the nature and extent of bullying in junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research*, 35(1):3–25.

Winn, J. & Govern, K.H. 2018. Due diligence and legal obligations of employment screening in healthcare organizations. *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, 87(1):e1. <https://scholarship.law.uc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1253&context=uclr>

Woodrow, C. & Guest, D.E. 2014. When good HR gets bad results: exploring the challenge of HR implementation in the case of workplace bullying. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 24(1):38–56.

Woodrow, C. & Guest, D.E. 2017. Leadership and approaches to the management of workplace bullying. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 26(2):221–233.

Workman-Davies, B. 2019. *Workplace bullying: remedies and recourse in South African law*. <https://www.skillsportal.co.za/content/workplace-bullying-remedies-and-recourse-south-african-law> Date of access: 3 May. 2020.

Wright, K.B. 2005. Researching internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 10(3), art. #1034 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x>

Yadav, R.S., Dash, S.S., Sinha, S. & Patky, J. 2020. Impact of work-place bullying on turnover intention: a study among Indian school teachers. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 27(4):33-59.

Yamada, D.C. 2008. Workplace bullying and ethical leadership. *Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 1(2):1–14. <https://scholar.valpo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=jvbl> Date of access: 22 Nov. 2021.

Yamada, D.C. 2010. Workplace bullying and the law: emerging global responses. In: Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C.L., eds. *Bullying and harassment in the workplace: developments in theory, research, and practice*. 2nd ed. UK, Abingdon: CRC Press. pp. 470-483.

Yang, Y.M. & Zhou, L.J. 2021. Workplace bullying among operating room nurses in China: a cross-sectional survey. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 57(1):27–32.

Zabrodska, K. & Kveton, P. 2013. Prevalence and forms of workplace bullying among university employees. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 25(2):89–108.

Zabrodska, K., Linnell, S., Laws, C. & Davies, B. 2011. Bullying as intra-active process in neoliberal universities. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(8):709–719.

Zadow, A., Dollard, M.F., Parker, L. & Storey, K. 2019. Psychosocial safety climate: a review of the evidence. In: Dollard, M.F., Dormann, C. & Idris, M.A., eds. *Psychosocial safety climate*. Cham: Springer. pp. 31–75.

Zahlquist, L., Hetland, J., Skogstad, A., Bakker, A.B. & Einarsen, S.V. 2019. Job demands as risk factors of exposure to bullying at work: the moderating role of team-level conflict management climate. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(1):art. #2017. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02017>

Zapf, D. & Gross, C. 2001. Conflict escalation and coping with workplace bullying: a replication and extension. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10(4):497–522.

Zapf, D. & Thierau, D. 2013. Conflict escalation and the management of workplace bullying. In: *Los protocolos y procedimientos de gestión de conflictos de acoso laboral y otras situaciones afines [Protocols and procedures for managing conflicts of workplace harassment and other related situations]*. <https://www.osalan.euskadi.eus/informacion/los-protocolos-y-procedimientos-de-gestion-de-conflictos-de-acoso-laboral-y-otras-situaciones-afines/s94-contqha/es/> Date of access: 22 Nov. 2021.

## ANNEXURES

### **Annexure A: Permission from Bergen Bullying Research Group to use the Negative Acts Questionnaire**

Dear Marius-Olaf

Thank you for your interest in the Negative Acts Questionnaire!

You have our permission to use the scale in your project as described.

As you know, one of our terms is that you send us your data on the NAQ with some demographical data when the data is collected. These will then be added to our large global database, which now contains some 50 000 respondents from over 40 countries. Please send them as soon as your data is collected. A SPSS database is attached to this mail in the NAQ info file.

I have attached the English version of the NAQ-R, a SPSS database, psychometric properties of the questionnaire and the articles suggested on our website. Please use the Einarsen, Hoel and Notelaers article (2009) in *Work and Stress* as your reference to the scale. I have also attached a book chapter on the measurement of bullying where you find information on the one-item measure. Please note that the zip file also contains the information needed to use the short version of the questionnaire (the SNAQ). Please use the Notelaers, Van der Heijden, Hoel and Einarsen (2018) article in *Work and Stress* as your reference to the short version of the scale.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

We wish you all the best of luck with your project!

Best regards

Oystein Hoprekstad, Research Assistant

On behalf of

Professor Staale Einarsen

Bergen Bullying Research Group

## **Annexure B: Online questionnaire invitation and informed consent form**

Dear prospective participant

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled: **Workplace bullying at a higher education institution in South Africa**. This study will be done by Mr Marius-Olaf Badenhorst from North-West University. Approval to conduct the research has been obtained from the Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee, Faculty of Humanities, North-West University (Ethics number: NWU-00900-19-A7).

The result of the study will be used to better understand the nature and extent of workplace bullying in higher education institutions and to provide recommendations to combat workplace bullying in higher education institutions.

If you are a staff member of North-West University, you are eligible to participate in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Information gathered during the research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and all efforts will be made to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. The information provided by you in this questionnaire will not be used in any manner that would allow identification of your individual responses. The data gathered will be captured in a database, will be statistically analysed and will be used for research purposes.

If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and your data will be destroyed. If you choose to participate in this survey, it will take up no more than 20 minutes of your time.

Should you require any further information, want feedback on the study or need to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Marius-Olaf Badenhorst at [olafbaden59@gmail.com](mailto:olafbaden59@gmail.com) or 063 779 8198.

### **INFORMED CONSENT:**

- I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without any penalty or consequences.
- I agree that the information that I provided may be used for research purposes.

**I agree**

**I don't agree**

## Annexure C: Online questionnaire

### A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

#### 1. With which sex/gender do you identify yourself?

|      |   |        |   |       |  |   |
|------|---|--------|---|-------|--|---|
| Male | 1 | Female | 2 | Other |  | 3 |
|------|---|--------|---|-------|--|---|

#### 2. In which location are you working?

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Potchefstroom  | 1 |
| Vanderbijlpark | 2 |
| Mafikeng       | 3 |

#### 3. What is your age in years?

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 19 and younger | 1 |
| 20–29          | 2 |
| 30–39          | 3 |
| 40–49          | 4 |
| 50–59          | 5 |
| 60 and older   | 6 |

#### 4. What is your marital status?

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Single or not in a relationship | 1 |
| Unmarried and in a relationship | 2 |
| Widowed                         | 3 |
| Married                         | 4 |
| Divorced/Separated              | 5 |
| Prefer not to say               | 6 |

#### 5. What are your highest qualification?

|                                         |   |
|-----------------------------------------|---|
| Less than high (secondary) school       | 1 |
| Completed some high (secondary) school  | 2 |
| High (secondary) school graduate        | 3 |
| Completed some college education        | 4 |
| Undergone technical/vocational training | 5 |
| College/University degree               | 6 |
| Completed some postgraduate work        | 7 |
| Postgraduate degree                     | 8 |
| PhD                                     | 9 |

**6. How long have you been working at the University?**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 0–6 months         | 1 |
| 7–12 months        | 2 |
| 1–2 years          | 3 |
| 3–5 years          | 4 |
| 6–10 years         | 5 |
| 11–20 years        | 6 |
| More than 20 years | 7 |

**7a. What is your nature of employment at the University?**

|          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| Academic |  | 1 |
| Support  |  | 2 |
| Other    |  | 3 |

**8a. What is your employment contract at the University?**

|                                |  |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Full-time contract (permanent) |  | 1 |
| Fixed-term contract            |  | 2 |
| Temporary                      |  |   |
| Postdoctoral fellowship        |  |   |
| Ad hoc                         |  |   |
| Other                          |  | 3 |

## B. WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying is defined as **repeated** and **persistent negative acts** towards one or more individual(s) by fellow workers or supervisors (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Salin, 2003).

Over the last six months, how often have you been subjected to the following actions at your workplace?

|     |                                                                                                            | Never | Now and then | Monthly | Weekly | Daily |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------|---------|--------|-------|
| No. | Statement                                                                                                  | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 1.  | Someone withholding information which affects your performance                                             | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 2.  | Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work                                                 | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 3.  | Being ordered to do work below your level of competence                                                    | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 4.  | Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks               | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 5.  | Spreading of gossip and rumours about you                                                                  | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 6.  | Being ignored                                                                                              | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 7.  | Being excluded                                                                                             | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 8.  | Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life               | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 9.  | Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger                                                  | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 10. | Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving and blocking your way | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 11. | Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job                                                 | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 12. | Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes                                                              | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 13. | Being ignored when you approach                                                                            | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 14. | Facing a hostile reaction when you approach                                                                |       |              |         |        |       |
| 15. | Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes                                                            | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 16. | Having your opinions ignored                                                                               | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |
| 17. | Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with                                             | 1     | 2            | 3       | 4      | 5     |

|     |                                                                                                                            |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. | Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines                                                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Having allegations made against you                                                                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Excessive monitoring of your work                                                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm                                                                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | Being exposed to an unmanageable workload                                                                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse                                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

### C. POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Comment on each of the following statements regarding the policies and practices on inappropriate workplace behaviour of the institution (university) you work for by choosing the appropriate option.

|     |                                                                                                                                                                              | Not at all | To some extent | To a moderate extent | To a great extent | Don't know |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| No. | Statement                                                                                                                                                                    | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 1.  | The institution (university) I work for has a policy in place to regulate inappropriate workplace behaviour such as workplace bullying                                       | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 2.  | The institution (university) I work for has a zero-tolerance policy statement on workplace bullying                                                                          | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 3.  | The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing the occurrence of physical aggression                                      | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 4.  | The policies and practices at the institution (university) I work for are effective at preventing non-physical (verbal or psychological) aggression from occurring           | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 5.  | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a physically aggressive or threatening manner at the institution I work for | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 6.  | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a hostile manner at the institution I work for                              | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 7.  | I believe there are negative consequences (e.g. disciplinary actions) for someone who behaves in a verbally aggressive manner at the institution I work for                  | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 8.  | If someone files a formal complaint about physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously                                       | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 9.  | If someone files a formal complaint about non-physical aggression at the institution I work for, his/her complaint will be taken seriously                                   | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 10. | I believe that people can get away with being aggressive towards colleagues at the institution (university) I work for                                                       | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |
| 11. | I believe that people can get away with being hostile towards colleagues at the institution (university) I work for                                                          | 1          | 2              | 3                    | 4                 | 5          |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. | The institution (university) I work for has support systems (e.g. counselling) in place to assist victims of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying)    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Life-skills training are offered to assist employees in dealing with inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) at the institution (university) I work for | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | I know what procedures to follow to lodge a complaint of inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) at the institution (university) I work for             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to the human resource department without fear of recourse                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | I feel comfortable to report inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. workplace bullying) to my manager without fear of recourse                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | The leadership in my working environment is capable of addressing workplace bullying                                                                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | I will feel protected by management should I become a victim of workplace bullying                                                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | I will think about leaving my position at the university if I become a victim of workplace bullying                                                                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | I will think about leaving my position at the university if I am being bullied and there is nothing being done to protect me                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | If I witness workplace bullying as a bystander, I will report it                                                                                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | The institution (university) I work for actively creates awareness about workplace bullying (e.g. posters, seminars, workshops, etc.)                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | The section at the institution (university) I work for has been successful in combatting workplace bullying                                                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

#### **D. PERSONAL**

**1. Are there any other concerns regarding workplace bullying at the institution you work for that you would like to share?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

## **Annexure D: Invitation email to take part in online interviews**

Dear prospective participant

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled: **Workplace bullying at a higher education institution in South Africa**. This study will be done by Mr Marius-Olaf Badenhorst from North-West University. Approval to conduct the research has been obtained from the Arts Research Ethics Committee (AREC), Faculty of Humanities, North-West University (Ethics number: NWU-00900-19-A7) and the North-West University Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC reference number: NWU-GK-2019-059).

I am conducting interviews as part of the research study to increase my understanding of the nature and extent of workplace bullying in higher education institutions and to determine the variables that need to be included in a prevention and intervention strategy to limit the effects of workplace bullying in higher education institutions. **As the director of the School for Social Sciences [changed according to interviewee]**, you are in an ideal position to give me valuable first-hand information from your own perspective.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Information gathered during the research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and all efforts will be made to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. The information provided by you in this interview will not be used in any manner that would allow identification of your individual responses. Each interview will be assigned a number code to help ensure that personal identifiers are not revealed during the analysis and write-up of findings.

If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and your data will be destroyed. If you choose to participate in this survey, it will take up no more than 30 minutes of your time.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanied challenges, I will not conduct the interview in person, but will schedule an interview via the video meeting platforms Zoom or Skype. If preferred, research participants may provide their responses in written format on a qualitative questionnaire. In both cases, informed consent is required.

If you are willing to participate, please reply to this email and suggest a day and time that suit you for the online interview; I will do my best to be available. If you prefer to answer the questions in written format, please inform me so that I can email the qualitative questionnaire.

Should you require any further information, please contact Marius-Olaf Badenhorst at 063 779 8198 or [olafbaden59@gmail.com](mailto:olafbaden59@gmail.com).

## **Annexure E: Informed consent form for taking part in online interviews**

### **INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

**MA STUDY:** WORKPLACE BULLYING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

**FIELD OF STUDY:** INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY

**RESEARCHER:** MR M. BADENHORST

**CONTACT DETAILS:** 063 779 8198; [Olafbaden59@gmail.com](mailto:Olafbaden59@gmail.com)

Dear respondent

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my master's studies. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved.

This **Informed Consent Statement** serves to confirm the following information as it relates to the study on workplace bullying among staff in higher education.

1. This study has been approved by the Arts Research Ethics Committee (AREC), Faculty of Humanities, North-West University (Ethics number: NWU-00900-19-A7) and the North-West University Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC reference number: NWU-GK-2019-059).
2. The main purpose of this study is to determine the variables that need to be included in a prevention and intervention strategy to limit the effects of workplace bullying in higher education institutions.
3. You have been invited to participate because you are in an ideal position to give me valuable first-hand information from your own perspective regarding the phenomenon under investigation.
4. The research procedure to be followed is a mixed research design, employing quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In the quantitative phase of data collection, an online survey will be used. In the qualitative phase, data will be collected through semi-structured interviews via an online

video platform. If preferred, research participants may provide their responses in written format on a qualitative questionnaire.

5. The duration of the interview session will be no longer than 30 minutes at most.
6. Interviews will be recorded to ensure sufficient transcription of information communicated by the respondent. If at any time during the interview the respondent feels that the recording should be switched off, the researcher will oblige.
7. If at any point during the interview the respondent feels uncomfortable, he/she will be given the opportunity to either make his/her discomfort known or immediately end his/her participation.
8. It should also be emphasised that participation takes place on a voluntary basis, with the consent of the respondent without any form of coercion.
9. The confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of respondents are guaranteed. Fictitious names will be utilised when quoting statements in the dissertation communicated by the respondents.
10. If a respondent regards any information as confidential in nature and wishes to prohibit the researchers to publish it in the final dissertation, he/she should make this known during the interview. This will be adhered to by the researcher.
11. A list of the questions to be asked during the interview will be made available to the respondent before the commencement of the interview on request. This will be done to ensure mutual understanding of what has been asked to avoid discrepancies during the interview.
12. A summarised copy of the final dissertation will be made available to respondents on request.
13. Should you require any further information regarding the research, please contact Marius-Olaf Badenhorst at [olafbaden59@gmail.com](mailto:olafbaden59@gmail.com) or 063 779 8198.

#### **Declaration by participant**

By signing below, I, ....., agree to take part in a research study titled: **Workplace bullying at a higher education institution in South Africa.**

I declare as follows:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent and the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests or if I do not follow the study plan as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

Declaration by researcher

I, (*name*) ....., declare as follows:

- I explained the information in this document to .....
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
Signature of researcher

.....  
Signature of witness

## **Annexure F: Interview schedule: Deans, deputy deans and school directors**

### **Interview schedule: Deans, deputy deans and school directors**

1. *Workplace bullying is defined as repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more individual(s) by fellow workers or supervisors (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Salin, 2003). Examples of bullying acts or behaviours include shouting and screaming, abusive or insulting name calling, false accusations, criticism, unprofessional conduct, negative eye contact, being the target of practical jokes, social isolation, physical intimidation, withholding information, excessive monitoring or micro-managing, unrealistic expectations, work overload, removing responsibilities and blocking potential training and development (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers 2009:32; Gobind 2015:156; Meyer & Kirsten 2014, cited by Du Plessis 2017:231). Have you encountered such behaviour (i.e. workplace bullying) in your department, at this university, or in general in your working environment? (If yes, please provide examples.)*

2. If encountered, what have you done in response to the bullying and did it help?

3. Do you think that workplace bullying is being taken seriously enough in your working environment? (Please explain your answer.)

4. Does the institution (university) you work for have any policy to regulate workplace bullying? If yes, do you think the policy is effectively implemented? (Please explain your answer.)

5. Does the institution (university) you work for have any intervention and/or prevention strategies in place to counter workplace bullying? If yes, do you think the strategies are effectively implemented? (Please explain your answer.)

6. Are the employees in your department aware of advisory facilities that are at their disposal at work? (If yes, are these advisory facilities of any help to those in need thereof?)

7. Do you think workplace bullying is a problem that needs to be dealt with in the working environment? (Please provide reasons for your answer.)

8. Do you think policy will be sufficient to combat workplace bullying in your working environment?  
(Please explain your answer.)

9. According to you, what elements should be included in a **prevention strategy** to combat the effects of workplace bullying in higher education institutions?

10. According to you, what elements should be included in an **intervention strategy** to combat the effects of workplace bullying in higher education institutions?

## Annexure G: Interview schedule: People and Culture representative

### Interview schedule: People and Culture representative

1. *Workplace bullying is defined as repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more individual(s) by fellow workers or supervisors (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Salin, 2003). Examples of bullying acts or behaviours include shouting and screaming, abusive or insulting name calling, false accusations, criticism, unprofessional conduct, negative eye contact, being the target of practical jokes, social isolation, physical intimidation, withholding information, excessive monitoring or micro-managing, unrealistic expectations, work overload, removing responsibilities and blocking potential training and development (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers 2009:32; Gobind 2015:156; Meyer & Kirsten 2014, cited by Du Plessis 2017:231). Have any employees of this university reported or lodged a formal complaint of workplace bullying towards People and Culture?*

2. If reported, how did People and Culture representatives handle the incidents?

3. Do you think workplace bullying is being taken seriously enough at the institution you work for? (Please explain your answer.)

4. Is there any policy in place to counter workplace bullying at the institution you work for? If yes, do you think the policy is effectively implemented? (Please explain your answer.)

5. Is there any intervention and/or prevention strategies in place to counter workplace bullying at the institution you work for? If yes, do you think the strategies are effectively implemented? (Please explain your answer.)

6. Do you think the employees at your institution are aware of any advisory facilities that are at their disposal? (If yes, are these advisory facilities of any help to those in need thereof?)

7. Do you think workplace bullying needs to be dealt with at the institution you work for? (Please explain your answer.)

8. Do you think policy will be sufficient to combat workplace bullying at the institution your work for?

9. According to you, what elements should be included in a **prevention strategy** to combat the effects of workplace bullying in higher education institutions?

10. According to you, what elements should be included in an **intervention strategy** to combat the effects of workplace bullying in higher education institutions?