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Workplace Bullying: An exploratory study in Australian academia

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Workplace Bullying:

An exploratory study in Australian Academia

This thesis is presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Manish Sharma

School of Business & Law
Edith Cowan University

2017

ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying is a behaviour which adversely affects individuals, organisations and the community at large. While substantial research has been conducted on workplace bullying in different work settings, limited research exists on this behaviour at universities; no comprehensive studies have to date been conducted in the context of Australian academia. This study therefore contributes through breaking new ground by exploring bullying within the increasingly corporatised and competitive Australian higher education sector. New Public Management (NPM) practices, diminished government funding, and limited resources risk transforming this sector into a full-fledged industry focused on corporate objectives to achieve operational profitability. Universities' primary commitment to further higher education and quality research may also be overshadowed by the bids to achieve revenue maximisation. The resultant competitive workplaces staffed by a more contingent workforce may also influence bullying experienced by both academic and professional staff in universities. While prior research has shown that competitive work environments can facilitate workplace bullying, no known previous study explored the bullying experiences of academic and professional staff in the Australian higher education sector.

This study's primary aim was therefore to explore the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying for both academic and professional staff within Australian academia. Being an exploratory study, this research adopted a qualitative approach to gather a rich description of bullying experienced by both these distinct work-streams in universities. Individual accounts of being bullied at work were gathered by interviewing academic and professional staff from four Western Australian public universities. Thematic analysis of these confidential semi-structured interviews provided

insights into the interplay of various underlying factors which enable workplace bullying. While many of this study's findings resonate with the established literature on the subject, others are unique to the two-tiered context of Australian higher education sector.

This study's participants, explicitly as well as implicitly, linked bullying behaviours in their workplaces to the volatile economic environment of the Australian higher education sector, and increased competition amongst its workforce. As the sector's changing employment patterns have moved towards a more contingent workforce, the sense of insecurity amongst university employees has developed to a point where many may prefer to endure bullying rather than reporting it formally. One strong theme emerging from this study's data was the role that organisational and individuals' culture(s) played in the occurrence of workplace bullying. Participants identified their universities' work culture as one which tolerated workplace bullying, despite the considerable impact on individual victims. Some participants also noted the differences in individuals' cultural backgrounds as triggers for bullying. In light of this study's findings, measures to ameliorate workplace bullying may include steps to spread awareness and respect about cultural differences amongst the universities' workforce. Universities might also consider explicitly addressing these issues in its anti-bullying policies. This study's findings also underlined the lack of consistently implemented, robust anti-bullying policies in universities to safeguard employees' well-being.

On an individual level, power was found to be at the core of bullying. The power differentials between the victims and the alleged perpetrators stemmed from the hierarchical organisational structures existing in the universities. Although hierarchies are set in universities to accomplish its objectives, these structures often result in power being concentrated with certain individuals who may misuse it to bully others. In some cases, it

appeared that bullying was being used to counter a perceived threat that high performing individuals posed to the alleged perpetrators' established power and organisational status.

Data analysis also highlighted the adverse consequences of bullying for both individuals and organisations. Workplace bullying was found to have harmful effects on an individual's psychological and physical health; its negative impacts extended beyond the workplace to victims' home life with their family and friends. On an organisational level, workplace bullying resulted in lower levels of staff productivity and engagement, while increasing universities' employee turnover and damaging institutional reputations. This study, therefore, highlights how the adverse consequences of bullying experienced by academic and professional staff may prove particularly detrimental to their universities. While the productivity losses due to workplace bullying may be less obvious in universities than in other organisations, they can impair the intellectual contribution these academic institutions make to society. Such contribution can be in the form of the quality of teaching and research outputs, as well as the provision of support services for the students and staff at these institutions. Since this study incorporated the inputs of both academic and professional staff, its findings may represent the views held by the larger workforce in the Australian higher education sector. This study also provides a base for further qualitative and quantitative studies of workplace bullying within and beyond Australian academia.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or
- iii. contain any defamatory material;



(Manish Sharma)

11.09.2017

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter provides an overview of the study. It begins by exploring the problem of bullying and its significance in modern workplaces; with special attention to academic work settings. The chapter introduces the philosophical context for the study focusing on comparing and contrasting bullying experienced by academic and professional staff working in four Australian universities. The chapter concludes with the aims of the study and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Bullying is an evolving concept in work and organisational psychology (e.g. Baillien, Bollen, Euwema, & De Witte, 2014), and has attracted a growing level of interest from academics as well as practitioners (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Gardner et al., 2016; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Research (e.g. Catley, Blackwood, Forsyth, Tappin, & Bentley, 2017; Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2016; Park & Ono, 2016; Samnani, 2013a) has suggested that bullying is on the rise in various workplaces. Increasing attention is also being paid to the prevalence of workplace bullying (Hurley, Hutchinson, Bradbury, & Brwone, 2016) and its consequences for individuals and organisations (Berlingieri, 2015; Hoel & Giga, 2006). Not only does workplace bullying adversely affect individuals' physical and psychological health (Coyne et al., 2016); it also results in negative consequences for the organisations (Hurley et al., 2016), in terms of absenteeism, turnover, productivity and reputation (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). These individual and organisational consequences will be discussed later in this thesis.

While Alrahmani, Brantley, and Rocha (2016) acknowledge workplace bullying's adverse consequences, they also underline the need for future studies to explore its occurrence in different work settings; including academia (Metzger, Petit, & Seiber, 2015), the focus area of this research. Allison and Bastiampillai (2016) identify workplace bullying as a compelling issue for Australian workplaces. As French, Boyle, and Muurlink (2015) note, workplace bullying not only adversely affects individuals' productivity, but also the organisation's overall performance. With this in mind, Butterworth, Leach, and Kiely (2015) contend that further research exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences still needs to be undertaken.

From researchers' point of view, Australian authors, Caponecchia and Wyatt (2009, p. 440), have defined workplace bullying as "repeated unreasonable behaviour, which causes or has the potential to cause harm to victim and witnesses". From a legal perspective, workplace bullying is slowly gaining ground globally in terms of applicable laws (Kemp, 2014). While the United States does not have explicit federal laws prohibiting workplace bullying (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011), Australia has recently amended its laws to provide a specific definition for this behaviour. The Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment conducted an inquiry into workplace bullying in 2012, based on which workplace bullying legislation was introduced in Australia. Australia's *Fair Work Act (2014)* which legislated against workplace bullying, defines the behaviour "as repeated, unreasonable and directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety" ("*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*," 2014, p. 244). Since this study is based in Australia, it is relevant to discuss the Australian context. The Parliamentary Inquiry and the resulting recent amendments to the Australian *Fair Work Act* in 2014 demonstrated that the country has a great deal of concern for this behaviour. Different

definitions of workplace bullying (e.g. the *Fair Work Act 2014* and Caponecchia and Wyatt (2009, p. 440), have similarities, as they identify the element of behaviour's unreasonability and repetition, along with its potential to cause harm, as key characteristics of bullying in the modern workplace.

1.1 WORKPLACE BULLYING

This study aims to explore workplace bullying in terms of its nature, influencing factors and consequences in an academic environment; exploring these aspects would assist analysis of how this behaviour unfolds in a particular and under-researched setting in the Australian context. Research on these aspects will lead to more awareness relating to the behaviour, which would aid in preventing, ameliorating and managing workplace bullying.

The ambiguity in defining workplace bullying stems from the absence of a commonly accepted definition (Berlingieri, 2015). Bullying in the workplace is a topic open to different interpretations by different people (Samnani, 2013a), with a level of subjectivity at play (Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereira, 2002; Gaffney, DreMarco, Hofmeyer, Vessey, & Budin, 2012; Nielsen & Knardahl, 2015). Omari (2007) observed that people, depending upon their perception of the situation, may or may not term the same behaviour as bullying. The majority of studies on workplace bullying are from the perspective of victims and are quantitative in nature (Balducci, Cecchin, & Fraccaroli, 2012). This suggests that there is a need to undertake qualitative and more contextual research in the area (Samnani, 2013b), which would aid in exploring how the behaviour unfolds, is experienced and interpreted.

1.2 OCCURENCE IN MODERN WORKPLACES

Twenge and Campbell (2008) observed that workplaces have modernised dramatically, with constant change in technologies, workforce demographics and the geographical boundaries of business. These changes may facilitate the occurrence of bullying (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015). Scholars (e.g. Beale & Hoel, 2011; Omari & Paull, 2013; Pearson, Anderson, Lynne, & Porath, 2005; Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016) postulated that such modern workplace dynamics have resulted in lower levels of mutual respect amongst workers in general. While holding similar views, Tuckey and Neall (2014) further contend that modern workplace scenarios may not only give rise to bullying, but may also facilitate its continuity.

The Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment, in its inquiry into workplace bullying, stated that “all Australians should be able to go to work and return home without being harmed, physically and psychologically” (Australian House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Education and Employment, 2012, p. 125). A national project in 2016, Australian Workplace Barometer project by Safe Work Australia, found that 9.4 percent of Australian workers experienced workplace bullying; this is much higher than the international average of 1 percent to 4 percent (Potter, Dollard, & Tuckey, 2016).

Bullying has repeatedly been shown to have unfavourable consequences for affected individuals, including witnesses/bystanders (Chen & Park, 2015; Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse, & van Dam, 2016). Researchers (e.g. Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Kwan, Tuckey, & Dollard, 2016; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012) suggest that bullying results in various psychological effects on victims such as depression, low self-esteem and suicidal thoughts. Victims may suffer from psychological problems long after the

bullying behaviours have stopped (Hogh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2011; Kemp, 2014; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). Workplace bullying may stifle careers, incapacitate employees (Park & Ono, 2016) and, in extreme circumstances, may lead the targeted employees to leave the job (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2010; Kwan et al., 2016). Bullying is associated with the health (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015) and lack of well-being of struggling workers (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012), and researchers (e.g. Burnes & Pope, 2007; Hollis, 2015) have consistently found that bullying in the workplace is correlated with heightened strain in both victims and witnesses. Nabe-Nielsen et al. (2016), and Hansen et al. (2016), highlight sleep disturbances as a prominent physical health consequence, while Laschinger and Nosko (2015) regard the loss of self-confidence as a major psychological health consequence of workplace bullying. On an organisational level, Neall and Tuckey (2014) observe that bullying leads to decreased productivity, high absenteeism, high employee turnover, potential incurrence of legal costs and possible loss of public image, if bullying comes to general notice. Consistent with views of Lutgen-Sandvik and Arsht (2014), and Mulder et al. (2016), workplace bullying not only impairs individual health, but also results in adverse consequences for the organisation as a whole.

1.3 ACADEMIA AND WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying in workplaces is not limited to any particular sector or industry (Namie, 2003). Higher education institutions are no different to others in this regard (Antoniadou, Sandiford, Wright, & Alker, 2015; Lester, 2013; Skinner et al., 2015), although their image may be one of an ideal workplace of intellectual debate and opinion, and one for other industries to emulate (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). Various scholars (e.g. D'Cruz, Noronha, & Beale, 2014; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Fevre,

Robinson, Jones, & Lewis, 2010; Keashly & Neuman, 2005; Kwan et al., 2016; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Park & Ono, 2016; Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016) have conducted much research on bullying in different work settings over the past three to four decades. Keashly and Neuman (2010), however, argue that the academic work setting is an important and largely neglected arena of bullying research, as scholars often choose to focus on workplaces other than their own. Some authors (e.g. Fogg, 2008; Gravois, 2006) have even suggested that academics and researchers presume they are immune to bullying and are enlightened enough not to engage in such behaviours. Keashly and Neuman (2010) further contend that academic institutions, in spite of also being prone to bullying; may outwardly appear as an exemplary work setting for other organisations to follow (Apaydin, 2012).

Academia is seen by some as a field, which is considered to be an epitome of ideal workplace behaviours and conduct (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, and Thomas (2008) contend that such an idealised public image does not make these institutions immune from bullying. On the contrary, this ideal portrayal of model working environment in higher education institutions, acts as a camouflage behind which bullying occurs, hides, and continues (Raskauskas, 2006). It has been reported that higher education institutions, in order to protect their public images, tend to hide such behaviours, a norm which has slowly ingrained in its organisational culture (Fogg, 2008). This may have influenced the manner in which negative workplace behaviours, such as bullying, are dealt with, or rather ignored, in the higher education sector (Hollis, 2015).

Nonetheless, researchers (e.g. Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005; Hollis, 2015; Lester, 2013; Metzger et al., 2015) state that bullying does occur in academia and not

only disturbs the working atmosphere of a university, it also echoes negative feedback about the institution in the larger societal sphere, leading to its potential ill-repute (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). Damage to the universities' reputation due to incidence of workplace bullying may also impede the future recruitment of potential staff (Hollis, 2015). Some research (e.g. Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003) has suggested that education is one of those sectors wherein bullying occurs the most, preceded only by social, health and public administration sectors. Despite advances in the field, a fundamental need to help higher education institutions reflect inwardly on their work environments remains (Hollis, 2015; Keashly & Neuman, 2010). Branch and Murray (2015) are of the opinion that workplace bullying is still under researched.

Individuals in academic and higher education settings seldom report bullying behaviours (Agervold, 2007) and when they do so, these institutions find themselves not well equipped, in terms of policy and procedures (Hollis, 2015), to deal with such situations (Salin, 2003a). Academia is also characterised by stringent hierarchies (McKay et al., 2008), high level of power imbalances (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Ngale, 2016), coupled with growing competition and financial constraints (Dow, 2014). These characteristics provide academia with all the enabling circumstances for bullying to occur.

Such a competitive environment may have influenced the way in which higher education institutions function (Hollis, 2015). Contrary to established conventions, wherein, knowledge delivery and skill learning are the core elementary objectives (Bosman, Coiacetto, & Dredge, 2011), these institutions are now majorly driven by their financial quest to survive in an increasingly competitive environment (Chang,

2015). As Gravois (2006) observed, such volatile sectorial settings may give rise to intensive competition amongst the sector's workforce, providing favourable grounds for bullying to occur.

1.4 AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA: THE FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

This research focused on workplace bullying in Australian academia. As Skinner et al. (2015) contend, the issue of workplace bullying is still largely unexplored in Australian academic work settings and further research on how the behaviour unfolds in this sector is needed. To-date, major studies on workplace bullying in academic work settings have been conducted outside Australia; in Finland (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994), Norway (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996), United Kingdom (Boynton, 2005), New Zealand (Raskauskas, 2006), Canada (Hollis, 2017; McKay et al., 2008), Turkey (Apaydin, 2012; Tigrel & Kokolan, 2009), United States (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Metzger et al., 2015), Italy (Giorgi, 2012), Albania (Buka & Karaj, 2012), Taiwan (Schafferer & Szanajda, 2013) and Czech Republic (Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013). Therefore, while there has been research on workplace bullying in academia, it has generally been infrequent and conducted outside Australia. There have been no known comprehensive studies of workplace bullying in academia in Australia, and there is a need to explore the incidence and significance of this behaviour in the context of Australian academic work settings.

To explore bullying in Australian academia, it is essential to understand how it is organised. Academia consists of universities, employing academic and professional staff (Favaloro, 2015; Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012; Pignata & Winefield, 2015). The workforces at these institutions are multi-tiered in structure (Adewale & Elumah, 2015; Graham, 2012), comprising academic staff, responsible for teaching

and research (Bexley, Arkoudis, & James, 2013); and professional staff, which provide allied services and support to both students and the academic staff (Hollis, 2015; Jung & Shin, 2015). Higher education institutions' primary function is to impart education to students (Bosman et al., 2011), who constitute the major, if not the sole, consumer base (Varghese, 2012). Research income, quality and outputs, in an environment of tight funds, is a challenge for many academics and higher education institutions, globally (Brown & Hoxby, 2015; Shin & Jung, 2014), as well as in Australia (Barker, 2015; Robertson & Germov, 2015). As Skinner et al. (2015) observe, this financially challenging environment in the higher education sector may provide enabling circumstances for bullying to occur as well as continue.

Higher education in Australia has transformed from being a sector devoted to the cause of furthering education, into a full-fledged industry, which functions and is primarily driven by business based objectives (Favaloro, 2015). It is an industry worth \$15 billion in terms of revenue and has emerged as Australia's third largest export, just behind iron ore and coal (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Australian academic institutions are large employers (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016), with a commitment to deliver higher education to the students (Dow, 2014). Australian universities, however, tend to function more as profit-making organisations in order to sustain their operations; which to an extent, has overshadowed their primary commitment to further higher education to the wider community (Chang, 2015).

The element of perpetual uncertainty prevails in Australian academia, as much as it does in other sectors (Dow, 2014). Research (e.g. Salin, 2003b; Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013) suggests that fierce competition and quest to achieve success at any cost dominate the psyche of most workers. With decreased commonwealth funding and

increased competition among higher educational institutions in Australia (Dow, 2014), there has been an increased pressure on the workforce, to generate maximum output, while utilising minimum resources (Bradley, 2011). The Australian federal budget 2017-2018 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) also cuts the higher education sector's funding by AUS \$ 2.9 billion, exerting further pressure on the sector's already stressed resources. Apart from intensifying competition in the sector, Hare (2017) contends that such cuts in funding from the government may also adversely impact the quality of higher education provided by Australian universities. The competition among various institutions is to increase their respective student enrolments, in order to generate more revenue (Dow, 2014). Increased competitiveness in the higher education domain (Schafferer & Szanajda, 2013) may be attributed as a cause for such uncertainties in the sector's current socio-economic scenario (Chang, 2015). Consequently, this may have resulted in increased work pressures as well as competitiveness among workers in academia (Shin & Jung, 2014), making it potent breeding ground for bullying (Skinner et al., 2015).

Apart from adversely affecting individuals, workplace bullying is also detrimental to the overall effectiveness (Park & Ono, 2016) and efficiency of an organisation (Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2011). The behaviour affects institutions' performance and productivity, as bullied staff are likely to reduce their level of engagement (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2016; Hollis, 2015; Keashly & Neuman, 2010) and therefore their productivity and output (Skinner et al., 2015). The Annual State of the University survey by the Australian National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) (2015) also identified freedom from workplace bullying as one of the key aspects that determine job satisfaction in Australian academia.

Academic staff in higher education institutions also conduct research, but a rising benchmark of performance and tight research funds create work intensification and competition (Lokuwaduge & Armstrong, 2015; Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2011; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016; Shin & Jung, 2014; Wilson, Sharrad, Rasmussen, & Kernick, 2013), providing grounds for bullying to occur. Bullying in these institutions does not only effect the victims and witnesses of the behaviour (Hollis, 2015), it may also have a negative impact on the workplace relations; and therefore the quality of education being provided to the students (Cameron, Meyers, & Olswang, 2005). Research in higher education (e.g. Hollis, 2015; Keashly & Neuman, 2010) has established that bullied workers are likely to engage in abrasive interactions with students, resulting in the students having unpleasant experiences.

The review of the literature (e.g. Lester, 2013; Tigrel & Kokolan, 2009) further indicated that bullying not only leads to adverse consequences on the overall research output of the institutions; it also adversely impact the individuals' own quality of teaching (Ambrose et al., 2005). Scholars (e.g. Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2004; Keashly & Neuman, 2010) have also identified withdrawal from work, as a predominant approach to handle bullying; wherein the concerned individuals may mentally exit from the situation (Park & Ono, 2016), while remaining physically present in their jobs. Apart from distressing the individuals concerned (Hurley et al., 2016), workplace bullying in higher education institutions may also adversely affect the quality of education and its allied services provided to the students (Hollis, 2015; McKay et al., 2008).

There is an implicit need to explore bullying behaviours in Australian academia (Skinner et al., 2015). Such a study would shed light on the nature and influencing factors of bullying, along with highlighting the potential consequences that such

behaviours may cause for individuals and organisations in particular, and for the society at large. The researcher chose to base this study in Western Australia (hereafter referred to as WA). WA is Australia's largest state and has four public and one private university, all of which are based in the Perth metropolitan area. The researcher gathered data from staff from the four public institutions. It is worth noting that, in 2014, of the 39 universities in Australia, only two were private (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014). Therefore, it is expected that collecting data from the four (4) public universities in WA would provide insights into the state of the sector generally, given reliance on funding from the government based on the same financial model (Hackett, 2014). The researcher chose to focus on publically funded higher education institutions, as they have more commonalities among themselves than their private counterparts (Amaral, Jones, & Karseth, 2013). For this reason, the only private university in WA was not included in this research. This study also paves way for future scholarly advancements in the field of workplace bullying in academic work settings, and may serve as an indicator of existing bullying issues in the Australian academia.

Building on Omari (2007)'s emphasis on the subjectivity associated with identifying workplace bullying behaviours; this study's major strength is its collection and analysis of victims' and witnesses' stories of their bullying experiences, in a specific work context of Australian academia. Given the complex dynamics involved, subjectiveness of the area under investigation, and a sector previously not studied in the Australian context (i.e. academia); this research is exploratory and therefore qualitative in nature.

At the time of writing, this study appears to be the first multi-institutional study conducted in Australia to explore workplace bullying in the higher education sector. Results from this study will make a unique contribution to the body of knowledge with its findings, showcasing the nature and consequences of workplace bullying in academic work settings, serving to bridge a gap in the existing research. The findings will further assist researchers and practitioners alike, to understand, prevent, ameliorate and manage bullying, and as Omari (2007, p. 185) suggests, move towards ensuring ‘dignity and respect for all’ at work.

1.5 STUDY AIMS

There is major consensus among the research community that not much exploration of workplace bullying in academia has been undertaken (Hollis, 2015; Lester, 2009, 2013). Recent research (e.g. Skinner et al., 2015; Treadway, Shaughnessy, Breland, Yang, & Reeves, 2013) has also pointed out that there is a underlying need to explore workplace bullying in Australian academia, as no known major study has yet been conducted in this particular work sphere. This exploratory study was qualitative in nature and focussed on workplace bullying in Australian academic work settings. The study explored bullying behaviours in Australian academia and the forces by which they are driven. There was also a focus on understanding the nature and consequences of workplace bullying in this unique context.

Park and Ono (2016) observe that workers’ perception of their respective situation and the industry, determine what behaviours they label as bullying. This study focussed on understanding bullying in Australian academic workplaces in an environment characterised by Dow (2014) as having high financial pressures, unpredictability, and

competitiveness. The exploratory aspect of this qualitative study therefore enabled the researcher to grasp this very element of subjectivity in incidences of workplace bullying in academic settings. The overarching research question for this study was to explore the nature, influencing factors, and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia.

1.6 PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

Prior to embarking on a research journey, it is essential to identify the relevant philosophical approach which would guide the study. Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, and Alberts (2006) contended that majority of research in workplace bullying has been quantitative in nature, following a functionalist approach. Samnani (2013b) points towards the need to explore this behaviour in a descriptive manner. Similar observations have been made by various other researchers (e.g. Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006; Liefoghe & Davey, 2001; McCarthy, 2003; Tracy et al., 2006) which, for the purpose of this study, warrants a qualitative approach guided by a non-functionalist paradigm (Clegg, 2010).

Highlighting the need to understand workplace bullying in qualitative terms (Suddaby, 2010), this study adopts interpretivism as its guiding philosophical paradigm. An interpretivist approach aims to understand behaviours through the meaning that individuals ascribe to it, based on their own experiences (Romani, Primecz, & Topcu, 2011). In accordance with the interpretivist approach, this study also aimed to draw upon individual experiences of being bullied, and an understanding of the nature, influencing factors and consequences of the behaviour, from the victims' view-point. Brand (2009) postulated that interpretivism is most suitable for studies which aim to

explore behaviours from the views of those, who were directly involved in its occurrence. Other scholars (e.g. Samnani, 2013b) have also used this philosophical approach to understand workplace bullying through the eyes of the victims.

To explore the meanings individuals attach to a phenomenon or an experience, researchers following an interpretivist approach use a variety of qualitative research tools to collect such data (McKenna, Singh, & Richardson, 2008). Samnani (2013b) describes interviews as one of the most suitable data collection tools for an interpretivist research; as it gives participants an opportunity to describe their experiences in detail and the researcher an opportunity to interpret these experiences (Tracy et al., 2006). In line with the interpretivist approach, interviews were conducted for this study, with academics and professional staff in higher education institutions to gather their experiences of workplace bullying. The research methods and tools used for this study are discussed further in the methodology chapter.

1.7 OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTION

This study explored the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia. Qualitative data in the form of individual experiences of being bullied at work form the backbone of this qualitative research. Both, academic and professional staff in higher education institutions, who formed this study's two distinct participant groups, were interviewed. Findings are reported separately, and the discussion will highlight both, commonalities and findings that are specific to academics and professional staff. The following diagram depicts the overarching research question for this study. The individual research questions are discussed further in chapter two and explored throughout the thesis.

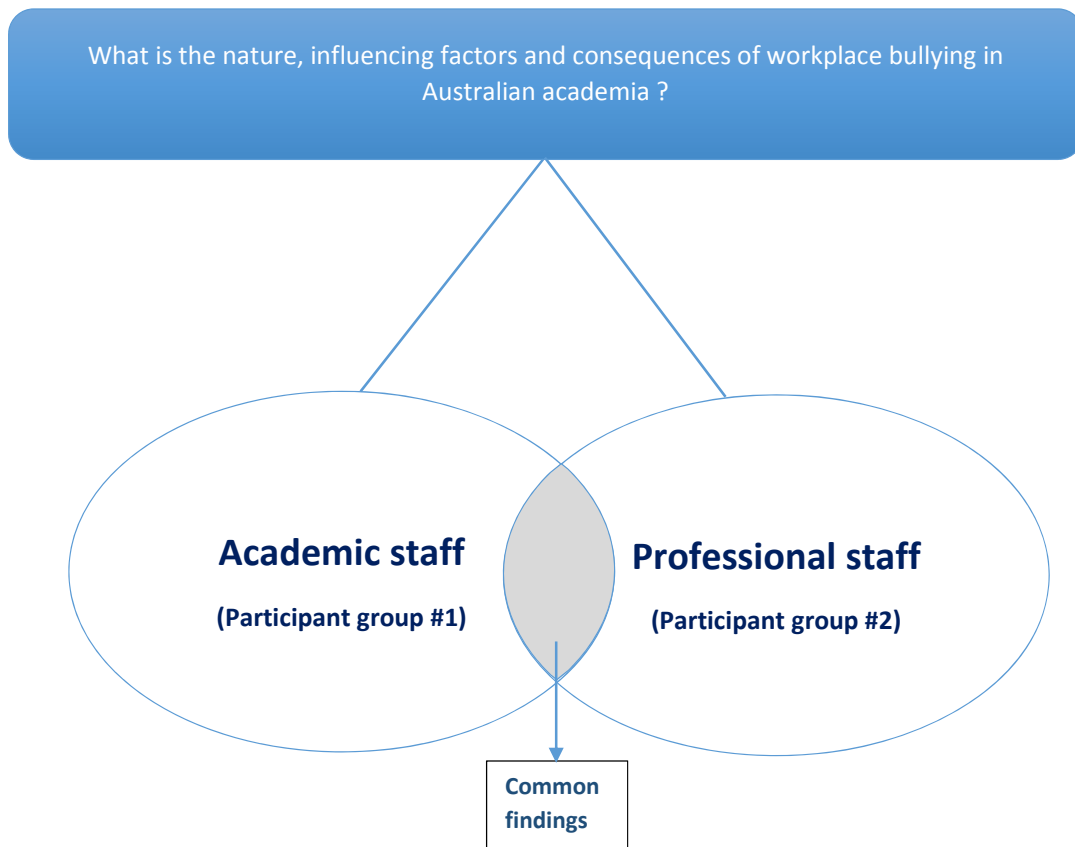


Figure 1: Overarching research question

Figure 1 demonstrates the different aspects of workplace bullying this study aimed to explore. These aspects include how bullying unfolds and what forces influence its occurrences in higher education institutions; along with the consequences faced by academics and professional staff. Answers to these questions will illuminate the issues of workplace bullying in Australian academia. These questions are discussed further in this thesis, alongside this study's theoretical framework.

1.8 RESEARCH TERMS

Across this study, certain terms have been used to describe the individuals involved in bullying occurrences. The term 'perpetrator' has been used for individuals who were identified by the study participants to have allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour;

while ‘victim’ has been used for individuals who self-identified as being bullied and had suffered at the hands of these alleged perpetrators. In line with established literature on workplace bullying (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Leon-Perez, Notelaers, Arenas, Munduate, & Medina, 2013; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012), this study uses the term ‘victim’ to categorise individuals who perceived themselves as having being bullied. The term ‘witness’ has been used to describe those bystanders, who observe the behaviour occurring. The behaviour itself has been referred to as ‘bullying’.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis comprises seven chapters. The current chapter provides an introduction to the subject of workplace bullying being studied in the context of Australian academia. Chapter two provides a critical review of the existing literature, exploring the various aspects of workplace bullying. The chapter outlines this study’s theoretical framework and detailed research questions, laying the foundation of a blue print to be followed for this study. Chapter three describes the research methodology adopted and the qualitative methods employed to collect data from academic as well as the professional staff working in different higher education institutions in Western Australia. In line with this study’s theoretical framework, chapters four and five report the findings of this study from academic and professional staff respectively. Chapter six brings together the main learnings and discusses the findings in light of the literature reviewed, along with implications for research and practice. Chapter seven bookends this thesis by providing the concluding comments and proposing future directions for the study of workplace bullying, in general and in academia.

This chapter began with introducing workplace bullying behaviours and its occurrence in modern work settings. It demonstrated the importance of studying bullying behaviours by highlighting the adverse consequences bullying has for individuals, organisations and the wider community. Special emphasis was laid upon the issues of workplace bullying in Australian academia, which is the key focus area of this research. The overarching research question and major study aims of this research were discussed; which include exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia. The chapter concluded by outlining the structure of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews the literature on workplace bullying and the Australian higher education sector. The chapter begins by providing an overview of workplace bullying and the various organisational factors that may facilitate its occurrence. The different aspects discussed include its nature, causes, perpetrators, occurrences and consequences. A description of the Australian higher education sector is provided, with a major focus on new public management; an approach that has revolutionised the way this and other public sector agencies are governed. The chapter further reviews how the stated changes may have contributed to bullying behaviours among the workforce in Australian higher education sector. Having reviewed the existing academic perspectives on the subject, the chapter concludes by outlining the theoretical framework chosen to address this study's research questions.

2.1 WORKPLACE BULLYING - WHAT IS KNOWN

This section aims to provide an overview of workplace bullying and the growing research activities in this field, followed by introducing its nature, causes and consequences; highlighting how the behaviour can be detrimental to both, individuals as well as organisations. Park and Ono (2016) suggest that research on workplace bullying is emerging and is in early stages of development. Scholars (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, et al., 2016; Nielsen, Mageroy, Gjerstad, & Einarsen, 2014; Salin, 2015; Tuckey & Neall, 2014) indicate that last two decades have proven to be conducive for initiating and furthering research on this subject. Despite being a developing concept in the field of work and organisational psychology

(Branch & Murray, 2015); workplace bullying has attracted substantial interest from both, academics (Bryant, Buttigieg, & Hanley, 2009) and practitioners (Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2010; Samnani, 2013c). The growing interest in the field can be attributed to the sensitive nature of the behaviour (Fahie, 2014; Hansen et al., 2016) and its widespread consequences for both, the affected individuals (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015) and the organisations they work in (Wilkins, 2014), and for society at large (Francioli et al., 2016). Much of the research has, however, been restricted to theoretical work on the consequences of bullying (Berlingieri, 2015), rather than on its nature and causes (Salin, 2015; Treadway et al., 2013). Hodgins, MacCurtain, and Mannix-McNamara (2014) indicate the need to further explore the nature and causes of workplace bullying. Vartia and Leka (2011) observe that studying these aspects may be instrumental in fully understanding bullying behaviours. There is a growing social awareness about workplace bullying (Kwan et al., 2016), as being both prevalent and problematic (Lee Gloor, 2014), which encourages researchers to further explore this subject.

There is a general consensus amongst researchers (e.g. Forssell, 2016; Francioli et al., 2016; Samnani & Singh, 2012) that scholarly understanding of bullying in workplaces originated in Scandinavia in the 1980s with the work of Heinz Leymann (Leymann, 1988); who used the term of “mobbing” (Leymann, 1996, p. 119) to describe the behaviour (Duffy & Sperry, 2007; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015). Mobbing may be defined as “hostile and unethical communication that is directed in a systematic way by one or more persons, mainly towards one targeted individual” (Leymann, 1990, p. p.120). Leymann used this definition as a practitioner for clinical diagnosis and treatment purposes. He designed a survey questionnaire on bullying, referred to as

LIPT (Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror) questionnaire consisting of 45 different actions which distinctively characterise bullying behaviours (Leymann, 1996). He observed that the bullying behaviours present in adults are similar to those that he had identified in his research on childhood bullying (Samnani, 2013b). The rationale behind highlighting childhood bullying here is that, it may be classified as a precursor to adult bullying. Scholars (e.g. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001) observed that negative events have a stronger and deeper influence on people than positive events. Research (e.g. Kieseker & Marchant, 1999; Metzger et al., 2015) indicated that childhood bullies become adult bullies and childhood victims tends to lend themselves to being victimised in their adult lives as well. This view is also an indicator of the potential linkages that childhood bullying may have with bullying among adults.

Leymann's description of workplace bullying influenced succeeding definitions in Norwegian, Finnish, German, Austrian, British and Danish research; however the American literature also refers related concepts such as "workplace aggression", "workplace incivility" and "emotional abuse" (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003, p. 31). As a general convention, the term bullying and mobbing are, more or less, used synonymously (Namie, 2003) and with a few exceptions, global studies conducted in psychology and management (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Kwan et al., 2016; Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2009) view bullying and mobbing to be similar in nature and application. For instance, bullying as a term appears to be frequently used in the United Kingdom and United States, whereas mobbing is preferred in Scandinavia and rest of the European continent (Sperry, 2009).

Karatuna and Gok (2014), in their study on workplace bullying in the public sector, noted that the behaviour is on the rise and needs to be studied further. Apart from exploring the nature of workplace bullying, such studies may also provide grounds for further steps to be taken to ameliorate the behaviour. Eisenberg and Matthew (2005) estimated that up to three quarters of workers experience some kind of bullying, such as rumours, name calling or public ridicule. It is widely accepted among the research community that workplace bullying is more than a singular incident (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Devonish, 2013; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011a; Heames & Harvey, 2006; Lewis, 2004; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Zapf & Einarsen, 2001); however, the criteria used to classify the behaviour differs (Coyne, Chong, Seigne, & Randall, 2003). While Devonish (2013) views workplace bullying as a series of negative workplace behaviours, Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) underlines the frequency of the behaviour; an aspect discussed further in this thesis. Studies have been conducted using differing criteria (Branch & Murray, 2015) ranging from a six month duration (e.g. Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001) to an increasingly stricter frame of weekly over the last six months (e.g. Leymann, 1996). Vartia (1996) conducted a study that did not specify an explicit length, but to be identified as a victim, the respondent had to answer 'yes' to the general bullying question and had to be subjected often to one single form of bullying.

Other researchers (e.g. Einarsen & Raknes, 1991, 2000; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001) proposed another tool, the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ), preliminarily featuring 23 adverse acts of both personal and professional nature, which were classified as bullying behaviours. Further investigation in its applicability resulted in an enhanced version featuring 22 items, which were more inclusive in grasping the varied nature of bullying behaviours (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009a). A major

strength of this questionnaire is that it estimates the prevalence of workplace bullying, without forcing the participants to identify themselves as victims (Zapf et al., 2003), providing them with an option to identify their experience as bullying or not. Einarsen, Hoel, and Notelaers (2009b) contended that the instrument is not fully applicable across different cultural settings, as majority of its items are based on research done at workplaces in Nordic countries, having less relevance in other regions. This also indicates that an individual's choice of perceiving certain behaviours as bullying or not, largely depends upon the cultural settings in which the behaviour occurs (Loh, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2010).

With advancements in research on workplace-related issues, an increasing amount of global focus has been directed towards the issue of bullying at work (Beale & Hoel, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015; Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013; Hoel & Giga, 2006). Scandinavia/the Nordic countries and the UK have emerged as leading the research in this field (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011), but scholarly efforts in bullying and mobbing research have grown significantly across the globe (Kara, Kim, & Uysal, 2015), drawing researchers and professionals from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the European Union and Japan (Zapf et al., 2003). Apart from the scholarly attention that workplace bullying has gathered, growing academic interest has led to various studies being conducted to grasp the dominant prevalence of this behaviour in various countries (Samnani, 2013b). The seminal studies have been conducted in United States (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007), the United Kingdom (Liefoghe & Davey, 2001), Canada (Leck & Galperin, 2006), Norway (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011b; Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994), Italy (Giorgi, Arenas, & Leon-Perez, 2011) and Japan (Meek, 2004). Although these studies differ in the prevalence rates

of workplace bullying, ranging from 50 percent in the United States (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007) to approximately 10 percent in Europe (Einarsen et al., 2011b); Samnani and Singh (2012) nonetheless underline workplace bullying as a latent threat to the growth and development of organisations worldwide. It may, however be noted that comparing these various studies is difficult, given the different occupational groups they survey and the methods used in these studies. Such an array of research investigations, in both the theoretical concept and practical occurrence of bullying across the world (Cowie et al., 2002), illustrates that this behaviour has been acknowledged as a growing concern in various workplaces (Lutgen-Sandvik & Arsht, 2014).

The disciplines involved in researching bullying are as diverse and varied as its terminology (Berlingieri, 2015) and include management (D'Cruz et al., 2014; Neuman & Baron, 2003; Pick, Teo, Tummers, & Newton, 2015), psychology (Cassidy, McLaughlin, & McDowell, 2014; Keashly & Neuman, 2005), sociology (Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006), anthropology (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2002), and organisational communication (Tracy et al., 2006). The majority of research on bullying has focussed on refining the behaviour's definition (Berlingieri, 2015) and understanding its consequences (Balducci et al., 2012), with a majority of founding researchers approaching this issue from their discipline base of psychology (Einarsen et al., 2003a). While psychology may provide a base to understand how the behaviour unfolds in a workplace (Rissi, Monteiro, Cecconello, & de Moraes, 2016), recent researchers tend to approach workplace bullying from a management perspective (Hollis, 2015), given the significant individual and organisational cost associated with it. Regardless of significant advancements in study of this field,

Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) view workplace bullying as a subjective behaviour in which there is a need to necessitate further research.

For bullying to occur enabling circumstances must be in place (Gardner et al., 2016); and there must be additional rousing or triggering factors (Beale & Hoel, 2011; Salin, 2003b). One of the latent factors, which allows bullying to go unchecked in workplaces, is the organisation's belief that such behaviour does not have any significant impact on performance (Lester, 2009); it has, however, been found bullying has substantial impact on an organisation's overall performance (Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011; Lutgen-Sandvik & Arsht, 2014). A study by Pearson, Anderson and Porath (2000) established that 30 percent of the victims deliberately reduced their performance and did minimal required job duties, just in order to meet the basic requirements of their job profile. The behavioural, physical, psychological, economic and social consequences experienced by individual victims of workplace bullying (Hogh et al., 2011) result in organisations having to confront increasing levels of absenteeism and employee turnover (Goldberg, Beitz, Wieland, & Levine, 2013; Hayward, Bungay, Wolff, & MacDonald, 2016; Hollis, 2015), along with decreasing rates of performance and productivity (Devonish, 2013; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Purpora, Cooper, & Sharifi, 2015; Rosekind et al., 2010).

In modern, result-oriented work scenarios, the approach of achieving the desired outcomes at any cost, is inculcated in the workforce; which also adds an ethical perspective to the issue of bullying (Salin, 2003a). LaVan and Martin (2008) suggested that workplace bullying is an ethical concern. They opined that bullying at work is a complex organisational occurrence with deep ethical implications (Rhodes, Pullen, Vickers, Clegg, & Pitsis, 2010), from both within and outside the concerned

organisation in which the behaviour occurs (LaVan & Martin, 2008). These behaviours have been an ethical phenomenon from the very inception of formal organisations and observed trends only predict that there will be an increase in its prevalence in future as well (Samnani, 2013).

Treadway et al. (2013) suggest that the approach of ‘the ends justifying means’ is subsequently rewarded by the organisations, resulting from the accomplishment of the designated objectives, at any and all costs. This is true in highly competitive environments, wherein individuals participate in obstructing and undermining their competitors’ feats to achieve their own predetermined goals (Treadway et al., 2013). In such an environment, the victimising behaviour of bullying is slowly, yet progressively, establishing itself as a tacit convention in workplaces. Scholars (e.g. Georgakopoulos, Wilkin, & Kent, 2011; Nielsen, 2013) postulate that organisations often face the dilemma when their leaders either encourage or fail to understand workplace bullying, or are inclined to dismiss it as tough management (Francioli et al., 2016). Catley et al. (2013) developed a model to establish the influence that organisational leadership’s perception of workplace bullying has on the occurrence and prevention of the behaviour, as illustrated in the figure below (Figure 2):

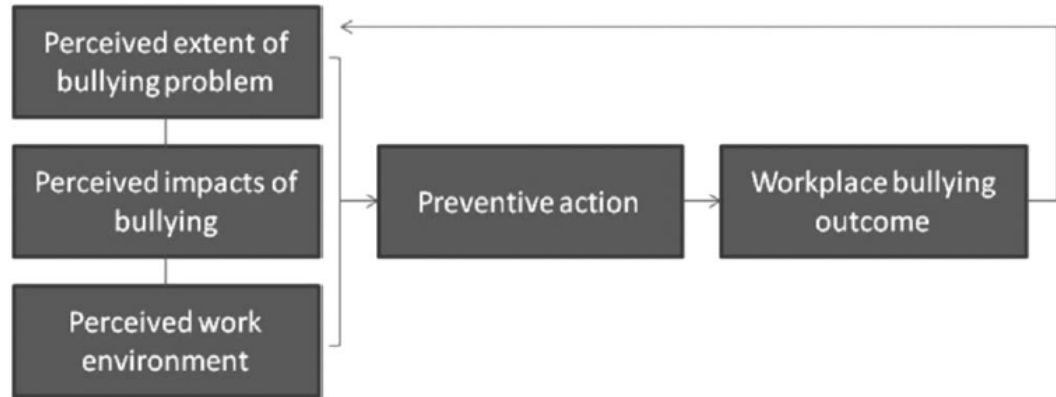


Figure 2: Relationship between perceptions of bullying and preventive action in organisations (Catley et al., 2013, p. 603)

The above figure depicts that organisations are more likely to adopt preventive measures to ameliorate workplace bullying, when the behaviour is perceived to have adverse consequences for both, the organisations as well as individuals. The organisational culture is contended to play a major role in determining if anti-bullying measures are in place and whether they are actively implemented; a view also echoed by Laschinger and Fida (2014). A variety of organisations have also developed comprehensive company policies to reduce bullying by their employees (Cowie et al., 2002; Harrington, Rayner, & Warren, 2012). Catley et al. (2013) identified that an organisation’s response to bullying largely depends upon how the behaviour is perceived at the organisational level. If an incidence of bullying was addressed seriously by the organisation, then such a response itself acts as a prevention to stop such behaviours from occurring in the future (Woodrow & Guest, 2014). Park and Ono (2016) also support this view, adding that the seriousness with which organisations view bullying behaviours, also determines how the workers view the behaviour as well. Nielsen (2013) further contended that workers’ negative perception towards bullying itself may prevent the very initial occurrence of bullying. It may be

observed that bullying is an extremely detrimental behaviour (Hodgins et al., 2014) that is gradually rooting itself in today's modern workplaces (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, et al., 2016), possibly as a norm.

2.1.1 REVIEWING THE DEFINITIONS

Despite the growing concern relating to workplace bullying (Gardner et al., 2016), there is disagreement relating to definitions (Chan-Mok, Caponecchia, & Winder, 2014). Being an exploratory field for research, definitions and viewpoints on bullying are still emerging in the literature (Samnani, 2013b), with researchers putting forward different viewpoints and definitional contexts (Berlingieri, 2015; Fox & Stallworth, 2010). Crawshaw (2009) has recognised 23 different terms that can be implied in connotation to bullying, with the most used/familiar ones being: abuse, aggression, counter-productive workplace behaviours, harassment, hostile workplace behaviours, mistreatment, mobbing, scapegoating, vexatious behaviours, emotional abuse, and psychological harassment. These terms depict the various understandings that surround the concept of bullying at work, adding to the subjectiveness and the dynamics of this behaviour.

Workplace bullying can be seen from multiple viewpoints, which include scholarly, practitioner, counsellor and legal expert perspectives to name a few. It is, however, valuable to observe this behaviour through two very distinctive viewpoints of research based and legal/practitioner based contexts. The rationale behind choosing these viewpoints is the intense yet contrasting depiction of workplace bullying that these distinct perspectives present. This section deliberates on the similarities and differences in interpretations, which the above two perspectives may have on this subject. A critical examination of these contexts follows, in which the subjective

element in defining bullying surfaces, illustrating that bullying can mean different things to different people, depending on their stance (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). Researchers (e.g. Paull, Omari, & Standen, 2012) posit that there is a range of definitions for describing bullying. The following are a few definitions which have been classified into two broad categories of research, followed by practitioner/legal context.

Table 1: Definitions of Workplace Bullying (Research context)

Author	Definition
Salin (2003b, p. 1213)	Workplace bullying is defined as a series of escalating and persistent negative events that result in the social exclusion and harassment of an individual while undermining their personal and professional reputations in the workplace.
Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2003, p. 127)	Bullying in the workplace includes emotional abuse and mistreatment of employees, primarily at the hand of supervisors, but may include peer bullying.
Einarsen et al. (2011, p. 11)	Workplace bullying can be defined as the subjective perception of the victims that the repeated acts directed at them are hostile, humiliating and intimidating.
Caponecchia and Wyatt (2009, p. 439)	Typically, bullying at work is regarded as repeated unreasonable behavior, where the behaviors cause, or have the potential to cause harm.
Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher (2009, p. 27)	Workplace bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment that takes one or more of the following forms: verbal abuse, offensive conduct and behaviors (including non-verbal) that are threatening, humiliating or intimidating; or work interference or sabotage that prevent work from getting done.
Omari (2007, p. 106)	Bullying is behavior that is unwelcome, inappropriate in the given context, and causes distress to the recipient.
Einarsen et al. (2011, p. 3)	Workplace bullying is an extreme psychosocial risk at work in which a number of negative behaviors, such as withholding of information that affects performance, the spreading of rumors, social isolation and verbal abuse are frequently and persistently directed over time at one individual employee. It is about employees experiencing persistent negative

Author	Definition
	behaviors perpetrated by one or more individuals on a less powerful 'target' who is often unable to defend themselves.
Thirlwall (2014, p. 41)	Workplace bullying is defined as repeated, hostile acts that are harmful to the recipient.
Einarsen and Nielsen (2015, p. 132)	The concept of workplace bullying describes situations in the workplace where an employee persistently and over a long time perceives him or herself to be mistreated and abused by other organization members, and where the person in question finds it difficult to defend him/herself against these actions.
Hogh et al. (2016, p. 72)	Bullying is defined as prolonged and repeated exposure to negative, degrading or offending acts at work, against which targets find it difficult to defend themselves.

Table 1 demonstrates that certain similarities and differences exist in the proposed definitions. While Salin (2003), Einarsen et al. (2011b) and Hogh et al. (2016) concluded that negative events and behaviours form a central characteristic of bullying, Caponecchia et al. (2009) adjoined the aspect of unreasonability and repetitiveness to the nature of bullying. Therefore, it may be suggested that behavioural negativity, unreasonability and repetitiveness are some of the well-acknowledged core attributes accredited to workplace bullying (Morris, 2016; Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2016). Subsequently, much emphasis has been laid on the various forms of activities that can qualify as bullying. While Salin (2003) suggested social exclusion and harassment of the targeted individual, Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2009) enumerated the behaviours detrimental to the individual's health like verbal abuse, offensive conduct and work interference, as probable bullying actions. Einarsen et al. (2011) and Einarsen and Nielsen (2015), on the other hand highlighted the importance of the victim's perception in defining workplace bullying and stated that it is how the victim perceives a behaviour, which determines it as bullying. Omari (2007) provided an

overview, which emphasised on the inhospitable and incongruous nature of bullying behaviour, based on the context of the respective work scenario. This contextual element is particularly vital while exploring bullying in higher education, as it provides for ascertaining what behaviours are appropriate in the given work context and which are not.

Consequently, the provided definitions also suggest a variety of possible perpetrators of workplace bullying, which have also been deliberated upon further in this chapter. Einarsen et al. (2011) suggested that both, supervisors as well as peers may engage in bullying, indicating the possibility of upward bullying; while Einarsen and Nielsen (2015) and Hogh et al. (2016) further advocate that victims of bullying are usually less authoritative than the perpetrators and are commonly unable to protect themselves. Bullying is differentiated from other workplace related conflicts or aggressions in that the victims(s) characteristically have less official or informal authority than the perpetrator (Branch, 2008; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Hogh et al., 2016). This view also suggestively points towards the element of power imbalance (Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015) and the role it plays when bullying incidents happen at work (Berlingieri, 2015; Buttigieg, Bryant, Hanley, & Liu, 2011). The behaviour becomes even more complex in higher education institutions, which have a rigid structure of authoritative hierarchies (Apaydin, 2012; Buka & Karaj, 2012), making it a favourable ground (Ngale, 2016), where individuals may bully others in the guise of this pre-defined power structure (McKay et al., 2008). According to Rockett, Fan, Dwyer, and Foy (2017), the hierarchal structure of work within universities not only influence the way jobs are conceived and designed, but also provides the potential circumstances for workplace bullying.

Different opinions have been proposed in these definitions on the physical and psychological consequences on the targeted individual. While Einarsen et al. (2011) cite the extreme psychological risk, Caponecchia et al. (2009) contended that bullying may be multi-polar in its aspects; either resulting in the actual harm being caused or having the latent potential to cause harm. From all the above definitions, it may be observed that bullying is negative and harmful in nature (Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016), with health deterring physical (Ryan, 2016) as well as psychological effects (Gardner et al., 2016). Taking an overview of various researchers' perspectives (e.g. Baron & Neuman, 1996; Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen & Raknes, 2000; Trad & Johnson, 2014), bullying may be defined as repeated acts and practices that are directed at one or more workers, are unwanted by the victim and may be done deliberately or unconsciously; causing personal humiliation and distress, along with resulting in reduced job performance and unpleasant working environment. Research (e.g. Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2016; Samnani, 2013b) has indicated that these stated features have been more commonly agreed upon and are identified to define bullying. Subsequently, it is vital to distinctly view workplace bullying from a legal/practitioner viewpoint, as it provides for the statutory context for defining bullying. Such a discussion will also provide a background on how the victims may or may not identify with these legal definitions of workplace bullying; an aspect discussed further in this thesis. These descriptions also depict the level of legislative importance that the government places on this issue.

Table 2: Definitions of Workplace Bullying (Legal/Practitioner context)

Proposing Entity / Legislation	Definition
<i>Australian Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act, 1986</i> (Section 19)	Workplace bullying means any behaviour that is repeated, systematic and directed towards an employee or group of employees that a reasonable person, having regard to the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten and which creates a risk to health and safety.
Queensland Government Department of Workplace Health and Safety, Australia, 2004	The repeated less favourable treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace, which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. It includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates a worker.
Law Society of New South Wales, Australia, 2004 (p.16)	Unreasonable and inappropriate workplace behaviour includes bullying, which comprises of behaviour which intimidates, offends, degrades, insults or humiliates an employee possibly in front of co-workers, clients or customers and which includes physical or psychological behaviour.
WorkSafe Western Australia Code of Practice (Australia, 2010)	Bullying at work can be defined as repeated, unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour directed towards a worker, or a group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety.
<i>Victoria's Crimes Act (1958)</i> amended by <i>Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Bill 2011 (Section 21A(1))</i>	Behaviour includes making threats to the victim, using abusive or offensive words to or in the presence of the victim, performing abusive or offensive acts in the presence of the victim, directing abusive or offensive acts towards the victim, and acting in any other way that could reasonably be expected to cause physical or mental harm to the victim, including self-harm; or to arouse apprehension or fear in the victim for his or her own safety or that of any other person.
<i>Australian Fair Work Act 2009</i> (amended in 2014) (p.6, Section 789FD(1))	A worker is bullied at work when another individual or groups of individuals repeatedly behave unreasonably towards the worker and that behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

The above definitions of workplace bullying (Table 2), through the practitioner/legal context, depict certain common features across the various descriptions. Foremost, the emphasis has been laid upon the very nature of bullying at workplace. The *Australian Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act (1986)* statutes workplace bullying as

unreasonable behaviour, which is victimising, humiliating, undermining and threatening and creates a risk to the targeted individual's health and safety. While echoing similar bullying attributes, the Law Society of New South Wales (Australia) provides more clarity on bullying's behavioural aspects, by classifying them into physical and psychological behaviour. While the *Victoria's Crimes Act (1958)* amended by *Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Bill 2011* did not specifically use the term bullying, it added the behaviour to its definition of stalking, to include acts that may constitute bullying (Hanley & O'Rourke, 2016). Others, like the Queensland Government Department of Workplace Health and Safety (Australia) and WorkSafe Western Australia use the term workplace bullying and describe it as an unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. It may be contended that 'unreasonability' on the part of the alleged perpetrator, is also a widely acknowledged identifying criteria of bullying at a workplace.

Another key aspect, which emerges across definitions, is the health and safety related risks attributed to bullying at workplaces. A more comprehensible definition has been deduced by the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee's Inquiry into Workplace Bullying (2012, p.15), which defined the behaviour as "repeated, unreasonable behaviour aimed at an individual or a group of individuals, often resulting in a risk to the victim's health and safety". This later became the accepted definition in the amended *Australian Fair Work Act 2009* (refer Table 2), which was revised in 2014 as a result of the inquiry, and has been enforced since January 1st, 2014 and is discussed further in this chapter. This inquiry also illustrated that there were a number of current pieces of legislation in Australia, which implicitly covered this behaviour, while none of them explicitly defined or identified bullying, let alone

redressing such behaviour. Hanley and O'Rourke (2016) provide a general overview of these legislations, as discussed below:

Occupational Health and Safety Laws: wherein the regulator may prosecute, with no provision for an individual to sue, apart from exceptional circumstances, wherein they are victimised for calling upon the law.

Workers' Compensation Laws: wherein, an individual may file a claim for weekly payments and medical expenses, but lack any provision for individuals to sue, unless stipulated threshold of serious injury are met.

Criminal Law: wherein the police may prosecute, with the victim under crime compensation provision.

Anti-Discrimination Laws: It does feature an individual right to sue, but only if the individual fits in the protected category, or any other harm has occurred under these laws.

Contract Laws: do feature an individual right to sue for the breach of express or implied terms of the contract.

Fair Work Amendment Act (2014): does feature an individual right to sue, but only if certain breaches like breach of enterprise agreement has occurred. With the amendments to the act in 2013, an individual employee, from January 1, 2014, may

be able to apply to the Fair Work Commission for an order to stop the bullying. The *Act* goes forward to provide a legally accepted definition of workplace bullying.

Prior to the amended *Fair Work Act (2014)*, there was a lack of a commonly accepted and legally binding definition of workplace bullying in Australia. The amended *Fair Work Act* has provided a legal definition, but may have failed to grasp an important characteristic of bullying. The *Act* states that the behaviour has to be repeated, in order to be identified as bullying. Researchers (e.g. Baumeister et al., 2001; Chan-Mok, Caponecchia, & Winder, 2014; Florriann & Seibel, 2016; Lee, 2000; Omari, 2007; Thomas, 2010) have long deliberated that singular acts, subject to their severity and resultant impact on the victim, may qualify to be identified as bullying. Regulatory bodies in some Australian states (e.g. NSW., 2009; Victoria., 2009) also do recommend workers to note singular incidents, which may later emerge as a pattern of bullying actions. This feature has, however, not been incorporated in the *Act*. Subsequently, it is particularly hard to categorise a single action as bullying. As a consequence, this makes it quite difficult for organisations in general and individual victims in particular, to seek redress regarding bullying at workplace. As evident from the above-mentioned current Australian legislations, the domain of workplace bullying still suffers partially from the element of legal ambiguity in its definitions and remedies. It may be suggested, that such a lack of comprehensive legal protection, in a way, may encourage bullies to tread forward with their bullying tactics, without any fear of possible consequences.

An introduction to the *Fair Work Act, 2014* Amendments:

Prior to January 1, 2014, there was no specific identified jurisdiction to deal with workplace bullying. Previously, employees had brought their bullying litigations in

form of formal complaints, through other legal channels, as discussed earlier. The 2014 changes to the *Fair Work Act (2014)*, instilled new powers in the Australian Fair Work Commission, that is to issue orders to stop bullying. According to the new legislation, an employee, who is reasonably convinced that she/he has been bullied at workplace, is now empowered to appeal to the Commission to issue orders to stop the bullying from continuing. The exceptions as to who can appeal, stipulates that workers, in businesses that are sole traders and partnerships, in certain state government departments and public sector agencies, some local governments and corporations not engaged in trading and financial activities; are not permitted to appeal under the provisions of the amended legislation ("*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*," 2014).

This legislation's basic drawback is that its main focus is on solving the conditions in the work situation, rather than rectifying them to support the victim, which is more of an aid to the management, than to the victim. This removes the focus from support that the victim needs, which in a way, mitigates the purpose of this legislative amendment. Further, the legislation does not provide any definitional scope of unreasonable behaviour (Byrnes, 2013), which provides for ambiguity in its terminology and gives organisations the liberty of portraying any of its actions, as a reasonable management action. The lack of importance placed on the victim's perception of behaviours as bullying, is another key drawback in this *Act* (French et al., 2015). These factors depict that this may be an ineffective and a 'smokescreen' legislation, which offers little support to the victims (Simpson & McPherson, 2014), and indirectly will help organisations to camouflage bullying happening under its system (Worth & Squelch, 2015). In light of recent research (e.g. French et al., 2015), the *Fair Work Act (2014)* appears to have done little to ameliorate workplace bullying,

underlining the need of further legislative amendments required to strengthen the legislation for safeguarding workers' psychological and physical well-being at work.

As this study is exploratory in nature, one of the aspects to explore is the definitions of bullying that operate within workplace contexts, and the extent to which these reflect the narrowly legal definitions of bullying and/or more liberal research based definitions. As this study was based in the Australian higher education sector, the victim's work role as academic or professional staff may influence their perception of what constitutes bullying. A more liberal and victim-centric definition sees workplace bullying as "the subjective perception of the victims that the acts directed at them are hostile, humiliating and intimidating" (Einarsen et al., 2011, p. 11). While sharing similar views on the behaviour's subjectivity, D'Cruz and Noronha (2014, p. 8) also hold that bullying often results in "helplessness" on the part of the targeted individuals, who are unable to defend themselves. Recent studies on workplace bullying in the higher education sector (e.g. King & Piotrowski, 2015) as well as organisations in general (e.g. Weuve, Pitney, Martin, & Mazerolle, 2014) have likewise chosen to refer individuals who experience bullying as victims of bullying; providing further credibility to this definition. The researcher is aware that this victim-centric definition has its limitations, especially given the subjectiveness associated with an individual's perception. This study, however, is focussed on exploring workplace bullying in Australian academia, through gathering individual experiences of this behaviour in the sector. Since the individual experiences of bullying are based on subjective perceptions of the behaviour (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Pilch & Turska, 2015), the chosen definition is most appropriate as a frame of reference for this study.

2.1.2 THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

Researchers (e.g. Cooper-Thomas, Gardner, O'Driscoll, Catley, & Bentley, 2013; Salin, 2003b) observed that workplace bullying rarely occurs due to just a single factor and is usually an outcome of various factors interplaying in the organisation's environment. Similar views are also held by Skogstad, Torsheim, Einarsen, and Hauge (2011, p. 45), who cite the 'work environment hypothesis' to state that underlying organisational factors often influence the occurrence of bullying at a workplace. Samson and Daft (2015, p. 88) refer to organisational environment as "all elements existing outside the organisation's boundaries that have the potential to affect the organisation". The role of organisational factors in the occurrence of workplace bullying has largely been ignored (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2013; Heames & Harvey, 2006). Einarsen et al. (2011) and Berlingieri (2015) attributed this neglect of organisational factors to the fact that majority of research on workplace bullying is focused on individual victims, rather than the implications bullying has on the organisations.

Ramsay, Troth, and Branch (2011) postulate that in order to fully understand individual experiences of workplace bullying, there is a need to understand various organisational factors that may play a role in the occurrence of the behaviour. Samson and Daft (2015) observe that organisational factors are present in both the external and internal environments. Literature for this study has been reviewed in the light of the below stated organisational factors. The following diagram (Figure 3) depicting the various organisational factors, both internal and external (Samson & Daft, 2015), also encapsulates many of the themes touched on in the introduction chapter. The diagram (Figure 3) guides this study's theoretical framework.



Figure 3: Factors in an organisation’s environment- based on Samson & Daft (2015) and Black & Hanson (2014).

Although these factors are generic to the environment in which majority of organisations function; most of these factors tend to influence the occurrence of workplace bullying in higher education institutions (Giorgi, 2012) as well as organisations in general (Blackstock, Harlos, Macleod, & Hardy, 2015). Each of these factors have been discussed below:

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The internal environment can be referred to as the environment existing within an organisation which directly influences its routine activities, it consists of the

organisation's structure, culture, technology (Black & Hanson, 2014) and policies (Myloni, Harzing, & Mirza, 2007); each are discussed below.

Structure is the outline that an organisation uses to define the different levels of authority and processes it undertakes to achieve its goals. The individual or a group of individuals who have legal or ownership rights to an organisation, along with the other stakeholders, determine this structure. The nature and form of structure determines how an organisation interacts with other factors present in its internal and external environment. This aspect becomes more complex for larger organisations, like higher education institutions (Parker, 2011), which have a diversified base of ownership and stakeholders (Black & Hanson, 2014).

Culture: Samson and Daft (2015, p. 107) define culture as “the shared knowledge, beliefs, values, behaviours and ways of thinking among members of society”. On an organisational level, Black and Hanson (2014, p. 97) defined organisational culture as a “learned set of assumptions, values and beliefs that have proven successful enough to be taught to newcomers”. Organisational culture can widely influence how members perceive or react to factors in the external and internal environment (Black & Hanson, 2014). Researchers (e.g. Coyne, 2016; Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Vickers, 2014) contend that organisational culture in higher education institutions play a significant role in determining whether workplace bullying is openly condemned or implicitly tolerated.

Technology consists of the scientific and technological developments in the sector, which may have an effect on an organisation's products and services (Black & Hanson, 2014). Based on the nature of these advancements, they may have a favourable or detrimental effect on an organisation. This can be attributed to the fact

that technological advancements may give rise to new offerings for one organisation, and can lead to decline for another which does not adopt to these changes (Samson & Daft, 2015). Technology has enabled individuals to monitor their subordinates' daily routines in great detail (Becker, Catanio, & Bailey, 2014; Farley, Coyne, Sprigg, Axtell, & Subramanian, 2015; Heatherington & Coyne, 2014; Trad & Johnson, 2014); which, in the view of Fox and Stallworth (2010), can enable bullying to occur.

Policies are the set of rules and guidelines which are designed by the organisation to carry out its activities in a uniform and consistent manner in order for it to meet its organisational goals and objectives. Policies are important to set directions for an organisation's staff and management to follow. Policies determine the formal ways in which the organisation interacts with other factors in the internal as well as external environment (Myloni et al., 2007). Fredman and Doughney (2012) suggest that policy changes, as well as absence of anti-bullying policies in higher education institutions can lead to bullying occurrences (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). Research (e.g. MacIntosh, 2012; McCormack, Djurkovic, & Casimir, 2013) has shown that organisations, despite having anti-bullying policies, are not keen on actively implementing them.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Black and Hanson (2014, p. 75) define the external environment as "a set of forces and conditions outside the organisation that can potentially influence its performance". The various factors in an organisation's external environment are explained below.

Competition: Samson and Daft (2015) refer to competitors as those organisations in the same sector, that provide similar product or service offerings to the same consumer

base. The level of competition in a sector also depends upon the level of entry barriers that prevent new entrants in the sector (Black & Hanson, 2014). Shin and Jung (2014) highlighted the growing competition in the higher education sector; a factor that enables bullying to occur (Treadway et al., 2013).

Economic factors: These refer to the “general environment representing the overall economic health of the country or region in which the organisation functions” (Samson & Daft, 2015, p. 93). The level of influence that economic factors have on an organisation largely depends upon the nature of the sector or industry in which the organisation operates (Black & Hanson, 2014). Higher education sector globally has undergone significant changes in its style of governance and funding (Fredman & Doughney, 2012); creating a sense of uncertainty and amongst the workforce (Favaloro, 2015; Lyons & Ingersoll, 2010), this may also be a factor in triggering bullying behaviours (Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2009).

Legislative factors: These consist of federal, state or local government’s laws and procedures which are formulated to regulate organisations’ functions (Samson & Daft, 2015). The legal framework determines what an organisation can and can not do, and depending upon their applicability, these rules can either generate opportunities or create challenges for the organisation (Black & Hanson, 2014). Legislative factors may include various laws pertaining to organisations, such as occupational health and safety laws (Samson & Daft, 2015). Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) contend that a country’s legal statutes against workplace bullying determine the steps which victims can take against being bullied, along with discouraging potential perpetrators from indulging in such behaviours.

Political factors: These refer to the prevailing political conditions in a country where the organisation is functioning (Samson & Daft, 2015). S. Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, and Coulter (2014) highlight the political factors, stating that it is the government of the day that regulates, through its policies and guidelines, the functioning of organisation. Black and Hanson (2014) contend that it is the political activities in a country and the specific views of elected government, which shapes these policies and guidelines. Bentley, Coates, Dobson, Goedegeburre, and Meek (2013) highlighted that governance of higher education sectors globally has undergone significant changes, and that this is motivated by the political ideologies of the ruling governments.

Demographic factors: These constitute a population's physical attributes, such as gender, age and level of education (Robbins et al., 2014). Samson and Daft (2015) postulate that demographic factors not only determine a population's physical attributes, but they also mould the norms and values, which the population imbibes. Demographic factors are accredited to be influential in shaping the characteristics of an organisation's workforce as well as its consumer base (Black & Hanson, 2014). Previous research (e.g. Keashly & Neuman, 2010) has shown demographic factors like age (Reknes, Einarsen, Knardahl, & Lau, 2014; Simpson & Cohen, 2004; Way, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Hepworth, 2013), gender (Gilbert, Raffo, & Sutarso, 2013; Giorgi, Ando, Arenas, Shoss, & Leon-Perez, 2013; Leigh, Robyn, Madelyn, & Jenni, 2014; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), and race (Misawa, 2015) to influence the occurrence of bullying behaviours in the higher education sector.

Geographic factors: These factors constitute the attributes related to the physical or geographical location of an organisation (Sykes & Crawford, 2008). Based on the viability of these factors, an organisation may have easy access to different markets, suppliers and the workforce, in part owing to its geographic location (Samson & Daft,

2015). Coates, Goedegeburre, Van Der Lee, and Meek (2008) contended that Australia's geographical location provided its higher education sector easy access to overseas markets; laying the foundation for turning higher education as one of Australia's key exports (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014).

Environmental factors: These consist of the various attributes of the natural environment, in which the organisation functions (Robbins et al., 2014), and which may have a bearing on its operations. Samson and Daft (2015) highlight the growing environmental awareness among organisations across the globe, which results in making them more vigilant towards minimising any damage their products or services may cause to the environment.

Societal factors: These constitute the cultural and social characteristics of the societies in which an organisation operates. Sagie and Aycan (2003) contended that social characteristics determine the key features of the consumer base, although it is the cultural values that determine how the consumers in a society would react towards a product or service offering. Black and Hanson (2014, p. 77) refer to these cultural values as "commonly shared desired end states" of a society's populace. It is these cultural values that determine whether an organisation's offerings has a consumer base in a society or not (Samson & Daft, 2015). In their research on bullying in the higher education domain, Metzger et al. (2015) observe that societal norms determine individual victims' as well as witnesses' responses to bullying behaviours.

The above stated contextual factors in universities' external and internal environment facilitate the functioning of higher education sector. As Fiabane, Giorgi, Sguazzin, and Argentero (2013) hold, these factors often mould how the employees view specific workplace behaviours. Giorgi (2012) sees discussion of organisational factors as

critical to any exploration of workplace bullying, since these factors not only influence the behaviour's occurrence, but may also ensure its continuity. The factors discussed guided the researcher in exploring the notion of workplace bullying in Australian academia. These aspects included the nature, perpetrators, causes, occurrence and prevalence of the behaviours and its aftermath; and have been explained next in this chapter. As illustrated in the figure below (Figure 4), the seminal work by Salin (2003b) succinctly summarises how these environmental factors contribute to the occurrence of bullying :

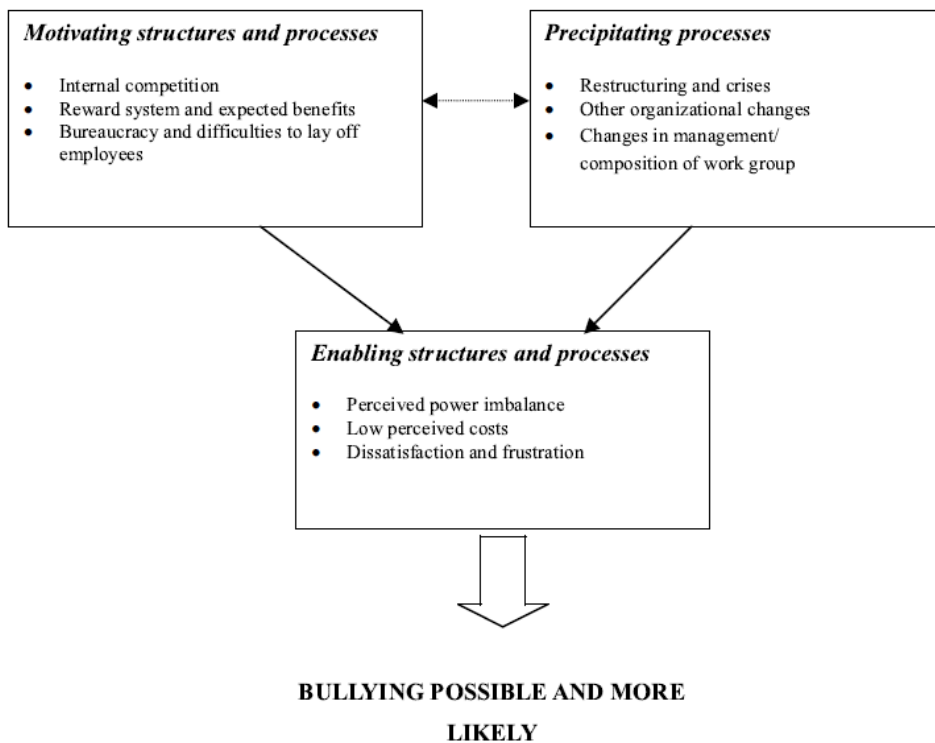


Figure 4: Enabling, motivating and precipitating structures and processes in the work environment that contribute to bullying (Salin, 2003b, p. 1218).

All the conventional organisational factors are not directly identified in the above figure but can be inferred (Hoel & Giga, 2006; Kwan et al., 2016) as influenced by factors present in an organisation's environment (Johnson, 2011). Competition and

bureaucracy (i.e. hierarchy), have been classed as factors initiating alleged perpetrators to engage in bullying behaviours; a view also supported by Tigrel and Kokolan (2009) in their research on workplace bullying in higher education. Although universities are conventionally hierarchical organisations, Pinheiro and Stensaker (2014, p. 510) argue that these institutions may also function as a “matrix organisation” with multiple reporting structures. Similarly, restructuring in Australian higher education has been identified by Davis (2005), who also highlighted subsequent change in the ways higher education institutions are governed. Power imbalance as a factor enabling the occurrence of workplace bullying has also been established by McKay (2014), who suggested that power allows alleged perpetrators to indulge in the behaviour. The hierarchical organisational structures which, as Keashly and Neuman (2010) observed, are a key feature of academic work culture, may also provide favourable circumstances for bullying to occur. Research (e.g. Favaloro, 2015; Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014; Zabrodska, Linnell, Laws, & Davies, 2011) further shows that increasing marketisation of higher education, has led the universities to be run as corporate houses, where pressure-filled work cultures give rise to bullying occurrences. This study also explores how such corporatisation of Australian universities may provide enabling circumstances for bullying to occur; an aspect discussed further in this thesis.

2.1.3 THE NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOURS

Researchers (e.g. Boyle & Wallis, 2016; De Vos & Kirsten, 2015; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Elliott & Harris, 2012; Escartín, Ullrich, Zapf, Schlüter, & van Dick, 2013; Pilch & Turska, 2015; Ryan, 2016; Sandler, 2013) suggest that bullying can be in different forms, ranging from physical (e.g. pushing) to verbal (e.g. name calling) to relational (e.g. exclusion). Bauman (2008) further classified bullying as direct or indirect.

Physical and verbal bullying encompasses direct bullying. Indirect bullying, or social aggression, includes less direct forms such as scattering rumours or social exclusion (Bauman, 2008; Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, et al., 2016; Francioli et al., 2016; Hassan, Al Bir, & Hashim, 2015) and setting up for failure (Olive & Cangemi, 2015; Ritzman, 2016), which may result in harming the victim's mental (Pilch & Turska, 2015; Verkuil, Atasayi, & Molendijk, 2015) as well as physical health (Cassidy et al., 2014). Research (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Hurley et al., 2016; Karatuna & Gok, 2014; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Verkuil et al., 2015) indicates that victims of workplace bullying suffer from mental health issues, long after the behaviour has stopped. Other scholars (e.g. Karatuna & Gok, 2014; Malinauskiene & Einarsen, 2014; Nielsen, Tangen, Idsoe, Matthiesen, & Magerøy, 2015; Rodriguez-Munoz, Moreno-Jimenez, Vergel, & Hernandez, 2010; Spence Laschinger & Nosko, 2015) have also reported victims to have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This signifies the amount of psychological harm bullying can do to the victim.

Cassidy et al. (2014) suggest that bullying may occur in different ways at a workplace. According to Berlingieri (2015), and Hurley et al. (2016), this behaviour may include verbal as well as physical intimidation, unjustified intrusion into individual work area, excessive and unreasonable work demands (Magee et al., 2015), unwarranted public confrontation (Salin, Tenhiälä, Roberge, & Berdahl, 2014), vicious task evaluation, in the guise of managing performance and undermining an individual. These acts may be personal in nature (e.g. insulting, criticism) or employment associated in character (e.g. excessive management of tasks), or may comprise of social isolation (Cowie et al., 2002; Rissi, Monteiro, Ceconello, & de Moraes, 2016). It may be observed that workplace bullying is aimed to humiliate, undermine, victimise (Braithwaite &

Ahmed, 2015; Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson, 2013; Kay & Makris, 2013; Lee, Brotheridge, & Bjørkelo, 2013) and threaten an individual (Nielsen, Einarsen, Notelaers, & Nielsen, 2016) or a group of individuals at the workplace (Hershcovis, 2011). Even though there is not a definitive listing of bullying behaviours, Nielsen and Einarsen (2012), and Francioli, Høgh, et al. (2015) suggest that bullying mainly constitutes of exposure to vocal hostility, being made the laughing stock of the department, having one's employment situation thwarted, or being socially excluded from the peer group. Subtle bullying can be wide-ranging from persistent criticism and censure (Karpinski, Dzurec, Fitzgerald, Bromley, & Meyers, 2013); social ostracism (Gilani, Cavico, & Mujtaba, 2014); withholding vital information (Hassan et al., 2015; Magee et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2016); unwarranted monitoring; tittle-tattle; shouting and yelling; personal jokes (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015); and taking credit for another employee's work (Fox & Stallworth, 2005).

Furthermore, envy, jealousy (Koh, 2016; Perminiene, Kern, & Perminas, 2016; Wang & Sung, 2016; Weuve et al., 2014) and scapegoating of individuals in groups have also been linked to bullying at the workplace (Coyne, Craig, & Smith-Lee Chong, 2004; Zapf, 1999; Zapf & Einarsen, 2011). Vindictive processes take place when groups direct their aggravation and hostility on to a docile and less prevailing group affiliate (Balducci et al., 2012; Einarsen et al., 2011; Francioli et al., 2016; Vandeveld, Baillien, & Notelaers, 2016). With the lack of conclusive categorisation of workplace bullying (Gardner et al., 2016), perpetrators often guise their behaviours as their firm but fair implementation of workplace related policies and procedures (Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016). The potential perpetrator may perceive the costs and dangers of bullying as very low (Pilch & Turska, 2015). If there is no policy in opposition to bullying, no monitoring procedure and no punishments for those who

engage in the behaviour (Harrington et al., 2012), it eventually leads to the implicit convention that the organisation accepts it (Salin, 2003b). According to Australian research on bullying in public sector work environments (e.g. Cotton, Hart, Palmer, Armstrong, & Schembri, 2001; Hurley et al., 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015), levels of bullying behaviours echo the quality of an organisation's people management practices.

Previous studies, like the one by Randall, cited in Lee (2000) and quoted in Omari (2007, p.15), suggested that singular occurrences can also constitute bullying, as the impact of the isolated event may be very momentous for the indignant party (D. Lee, 2000). The position taken here is that the focus should be on the consequences for the victim (Fahie, 2014), and therefore solo acts, if noteworthy enough, may also amount to bullying (Omari, 2007). The rationality behind this observation is that a single incident can be so distressing and intense (Florriann & Seibel, 2016), that it can have an extended, profound impact on the individual's physical and/or psychological well-being (Thomas, 2010). Subsequently, this may often result in momentous implications for the concerned individual, over the course of time.

COSTS OF BULLYING

Two different kinds of cost may be incurred, namely at the employee level and the resultant monetary cost at the organisational level (Hoel et al., 2011). For an individual worker, bullying may gesture to the concerned individuals that they are not valued and respected (Sidle, 2010). This causes high stress levels (Anderson & Chhiba, 2014), with their related ill-effects, on the employees, as they constantly strive to discharge their work duties (Gardner et al., 2016), while suffering from bullying at work (Hogh et al., 2011). Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2007) suggested that victims of this behaviour

foresee the work day with dread and a sense of impending doom. Researchers (e.g. Matthiesen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2008) stated that suffering, and even simple witnessing of bullying behaviour at work, results in decreased level of job satisfaction and commitment among the employees (Florriann & Seibel, 2016); subsequently leading to a decrease in their productivity (Chen & Park, 2015).

The costs incurred by the organisations, as a result of this effect on an individual, may include factors such as the lack of employee motivation, decreased job satisfaction and reduced work performance (Hoel et al., 2011; Park & Ono, 2016). Bullying causes as well as contributes to negative organisational outcomes such as higher absenteeism (Francioli et al., 2016; O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007) and higher voluntary turnover (Hollis, 2015; Tepper, 2000). Johnson and Rea (2009) and Wiedmer (2010) indicated that the associated monetary costs may comprise of increased sick leaves, reduced talent pool and loss of public goodwill, in case the workplace bullying incident comes to wider public knowledge. All these above costs may substantially result in the organisation's failure to accomplish its designated objectives (Kemp, 2014). From these deliberations, it may be construed that workplace bullying is a precarious hazard, at both individual (Nielsen et al., 2014) as well as organisational level (Hoel et al., 2011), and decisive measures need to be implemented in order to curb its occurrence across the workplaces (Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016).

2.1.4 CAUSES OF THE BEHAVIOUR

As researchers (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011a; Zapf & Einarsen, 2003) attempted to understand this behaviour, their subsequent investigations acknowledged a broad variety of possible motives of bullying (Neill & Tuckey, 2014), which may lie with the organisation; the perpetrator, the social psychology of the workgroup and the

victim. It may be observed that reasons for bullying behaviour at workplaces may vary from individual factors like past experiences, personality traits, present circumstances to wider pertinent organisational factors like career advancement and position consolidation in the organisational structure (Einarsen et al., 2011a).

Researchers (e.g. Harvey, Heames, Richey, & Leonard, 2006; Lereya, Copeland, Zammit, & Wolke, 2015; Metzger et al., 2015; Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003) suggested that the peril of being bullied is high for those who were, at their school level, either bullies or victims. Peskin, Tortolero and Markham (2006) observed that individuals, who were bullied at some stage in their lives (e.g. school or tertiary or further studies), either tend to be bullied in the future or may even turn bullies themselves. This indicates that bullying majorly occurs because these former victims of bullying believe it as is their retribution of past suffering, when they go forward and bully someone else (Lee & Brotheridge, 2006).

Wilson (2004) opined that perpetrators are weak, incompetent and immature. Such individuals tend to be implicitly insecure in their own selves (Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014), with respect to their self-esteem personally and their current work position professionally. Jennifer, Cowie, and Ananiadou (2003), and Park and Ono (2016) contended that this feeling of insecurity may lead alleged perpetrators to be envious of others, who perform better than them. These alleged perpetrators believe that by subduing another individual, they are well securing their own standing in the workplace (Pilch & Turska, 2015). Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2011) deliberated that being interloper and rule breaking on the part of the

victim, may be a probable reason why an individual would be targeted by a perpetrator of workplace bullying.

The conflict of interest perspective also adds to the initial occurrence of bullying. Lee (2000) indicated that, due to larger societal forces, an ever-increasing struggle for efficiency and profitability may lead to an increase in bullying. In a number of instances, workplace bullying may be perpetrated in order to further an individual's own self-interest, which is in turn rewarded by the organisation through promotion (Einarsen et al., 2011a; Salin, 2003a). From a discrete perspective, perpetrators are intelligent, clever and skilled at manipulating (Hutchinson, 2013) and misrepresenting facts (Peyton, 2003; Treadway et al., 2013). The taboo surrounding the issue of workplace bullying (Johnson, Boutain, Tsai, & De Castro, 2015) also restricts the discussion around the behaviour (Costa et al., 2015), preventing victims to report it in the first place (Einarsen, 2005; Einarsen et al., 2011a). With constantly spreading global awareness on this issue, there have been steps taken forward (e.g. Australia's amended *Fair Work Act 2014*) to legally define this disparaging behaviour, which is inappropriate, negative and uncivil in its *conduct*; and to incorporate various legal discourses for its remedy. More anticipated steps in the future could be taken to defend individuals against such behaviour, by making the perpetrator legally accountable for his/her deeds and bringing such individuals to justice.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE

Zabrodska and Kveton (2013) postulate that bullying behaviours may be influenced by cultural elements which need to be studied further. Such an exploration on the role of culture on incidences of bullying may help in a better understanding its surrounding peripherals and environment factors. Culture is an immensely prevalent concept, with

major social science electronic databases supplying 100,000 to 700,000 search results relating to it over a decade ago (Taras, Rowney, & Steel, 2007). Culture has been referred to as the way of life for an entire society (Ojo, 2010). Culture may be defined as shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of important events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). Culture, although being a very commonly used word, still does not seem to have a widely accepted singular definition (Hofstede, 2001; Hu, Dinev, Hart, & Cooke, 2012; Tsui, Zhang, Wang, Xin, & Wu, 2006), with most reviews indicating that the number of definitions are only on the rise (Omari & Sharma, 2016).

The occurrence, acceptance and protest against workplace bullying depend upon a number of surrounding organisational environs (Kwan et al., 2016). The incidence and sustenance of bullying at workplaces, to a large extent, also depends upon the various individual cultural variables in the organisations (Jacobson, Hood, & Buren III, 2014; Leong & Crossman, 2016). Lutgen-Sandvik and McDermott (2008) suggested that the occurrence of bullying may be triggered by global economic environments, as well as social and cultural traditions. Studies (e.g. Francioli et al., 2016; Georgakopoulos et al., 2011; Omari, Paull, D'Cruz, & Guneri, 2014) have established that organisational cultures aggravate the crisis when the leaders either fail to recognise workplace bullying or disregard it as strong administration. The values and norms of the workplace determine how bullying is defined in that setting, how staff construe situations (for example, as bullying or firm management), and whether bullying is acknowledged as an issue (Cowie et al., 2002; Hollis, 2017). In some organisations, bullying and other forms of aggravation are implicitly, more or less permitted as the

way things are done (Salin, 2003b). Previous research (e.g. Giorgi, 2010) has established, that in a majority of cases, the victims' feeling of being bullied takes the overall precedence, than any other independent valuation of the scenario or the alleged perpetrator's intentions.

Branch (2008) suggested that the majority of research on workplace bullying has been undertaken by scientists, who have investigated a variety of abusive behaviours at work, like aggression, mobbing and harassment. The issue of the cultural impact on the individuals' understanding of workplace bullying has, however, largely been neglected (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Jacobson et al., 2014; Sidle, 2010). Recent studies (e.g. Hollis, 2017; Jacobson et al., 2014; Pilch & Turska, 2015; Samnani, 2013a) have demonstrated the knowledge gap between workplace bullying and the role that culture, in all its forms, plays in its occurrence. Certain forms of workplace interactions, conventionally approved in the past, are now considered as improper, abusive, and even unethical, under different cultural settings (Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2011) which include workplace culture (Han & Ha, 2016) and an individual's own cultural background (Giorgi, Leon-Perez, & Arenas, 2015; Leong & Crossman, 2016). For the purpose of this study, culture has been used as a wider term, encompassing both workplaces' organisational as well as individual's national or ethnic culture.

Scholars (e.g. Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007) suggested that research should be undertaken to study the cultural constructs that facilitate, initiate, and even reward bullying behaviour, as such research may deliver outcomes, which may aid in reducing the occurrence of bullying. The importance of this aspect may be judged from the

preceding research (e.g. Ireland, 2006; Park & Ono, 2016), which has indicated that the prevalence of workplace bullying varies according to the worker's perception; and also is influenced by the workplace cultural settings (Moayed, Daraiseh, & Shell, 2006).

CULTURE IN ORGANISATIONS

Until the mid 1980s, organisations were, for most, plainly thought of as rational means by which to synchronise and organise a group of people (Robbins, Judge, & Vohra, 2012). Research (e.g. Loh et al., 2010) has indicated that different standpoints on bullying may be dependent on a culture's acceptance of various power and hierarchical structures. Studies (e.g. Restubog & Bordia, 2006) indicated that organisations with an open culture have frankness as a key attribute in their working style, which subsequently results in low power distance and the individuals feel free to approach their superiors with issues of concern. Bullying behaviour in such workplaces may be openly identified by the victim or other witnessing co-workers and subsequently be reported to the appropriate authority for its redress. Literature (e.g. Loh et al., 2010) postulated that in such organisations, the incidence of workplace bullying is looked down upon and discouraged on a wider social spectrum. Research (e.g. Chen & Park, 2015; Escartin, Zapf, et al., 2011; Vartia, 2001) has indicated that witnesses also suffer when someone is bullied in the workplace and that bullying must be recognised as a problem for the entire work unit and not merely as a problem of the victim. While underlining how conflicts can mould a group's behaviour, the "Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 33) also aids in understanding how negative workplace behaviours, like bullying, can become an issue for the whole workplace.

From another perspective, organisations with closed cultures have a fundamental level of common social conformity as their integral foundation, which imperatively gives rise to high levels of power distances, often resulting in stringent organisational hierarchies (Loh et al., 2010). In such organisations, individuals may tend to unquestionably follow their bosses and subjective inquisitiveness on superiors' decisions may not commonly be accepted or appreciated. A typical form of institutionalised bullying has been observed to transpire in such organisations, where there are high power imbalances (Salin, 2003b). This indicates that bullying behaviour is quietly overlooked by other organisational members, acknowledging it as a tacit convention, and that the victim is expected to endure it as his/her providence in the matter.

These distinctive perspectives on bullying may pivot on a culture's recognition of hierarchical authority, or power distance (Loh et al., 2010). Organisational culture and the level of power distance within an organisation characteristically play an important role in the way workers may perceive the behaviour (Francioli, Conway, et al., 2015). Organisational culture can be referred to as a set of shared mental assumptions that guide interpretation and actions in organisations by defining appropriate behaviour for different situations (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Power distance can be defined as the degree to which a society accepts that authority in institutions and organisations is disseminated inequitably (Hofstede, 1980). In some cultures, bullying is professed as an adequate and effective tool for task accomplishments, while there are other cultures that cite it as deplorable (Salin, 2003b).

A level of agreement among researchers has been noted, indicating that societies high in power distance are inclined to acknowledge that power differences exist among individuals, while societies with low power distance tend to accept that individuals will have relatively equivalent power (Loh et al., 2010). It is imperative from the above deliberations that, 'caeteris paribus' (Glennan, 2014, p. 420), workplace bullying is more commonly found and less discouraged in organisations with closed work cultures with high power distance, than in those with open work cultures and low power distance (Salin, 2003b). Stone-Romero, Stone, and Salas (2003) contended that the role of organisational culture has been largely ignored in the turf of organisational behaviour and needs to be explored further.

As culture oriented studies of workplace bullying have been rare (Jacobson et al., 2014), it is worthy to question whether culture influences an employee's response to workplace bullying (Loh et al., 2010). With growth in immigration around the world and cross-border expansion of trades, cross-cultural issues have subsequently become relevant to the scholarly discipline of management (Taras et al., 2007). In attempting to explore workplace bullying, it may be vital to establish what behaviours employees consider to constitute workplace bullying (Zapf & Einarsen, 2011), and whether they are the same across different workplace cultures (Escartin, Zapf, et al., 2011). Studies (e.g. Samnani, 2013a; Vickers, 2007) have indicated that workers in toxic workplaces, tend to view bullying as a norm of accepted behaviour and overlook it, or even be completely oblivious to its detrimental consequences. These perceptions need to be explored further, as they collectively have a significant influence on the formation of the workplace culture.

Research (e.g. Lewis, 2006; Sidle, 2010) indicated that organisational cultures have a substantial influence on the occurrence of bullying behaviours. It is therefore imperative to review different scholarly viewpoints describing organisational culture. Armstrong (1999) contended that the organisational culture is the pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions that may not have been articulated but shape the ways in which people behave and things get done. Values refer to what is believed to be important about how people and the organisations behave, while norms are unwritten rules of behaviour (Armstrong, 1999). These values and norms may lie at the heart of both national and organisational culture.

Researchers (O'Reilly III, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) developed the Organisational Culture Profile (OCP) and suggested that there are seven primary characteristics that, in aggregate, capture the essence of an organisation's culture. These include innovation and risk taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness and stability. Each of these characteristics exists on a continuum from low to high. Appraising the organisation on these seven characteristics, then, gives a composite picture of its culture (Robbins, 2003).

Schein (1983) suggested that the process of culture creation occurs in three ways. Firstly, founders only hire and keep employees who think and feel the way they do. Secondly, they indoctrinate and socialise these employees to their way of thinking and feeling. And finally, the founder's own behaviour acts as a role model that encourages employees to identify with them and thereby internalise their beliefs, values and assumptions. When the organisation succeeds, the founder's vision becomes seen as a

primary determinant of that success. At this point, the founder's entire personality becomes embedded in the culture of the organisation.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) described organisational culture as the way things get done around here, and classified culture, based on the four types of organisations. These are work hard, play hard culture; tough-guy macho culture; process culture and bet-the-company culture. They each focused on how quickly the organisation receives feedback, the way members were rewarded, and the level of risks taken. The focus was centred on the organisations' quickness of response on the feedback received, the reward system for its members and the level of risk taking practised by it.

Another significant framework to assess organisational culture is developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert Quinn and is known as the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), which explains the latent value orientations that characterise organisational culture. Other researchers exploring the interplay between organisational culture and workplace bullying, such as Omari (2007) and Pilch and Turska (2015), have also based their studies on the Competing Values Framework. This framework therefore seemed well suited for this study's analysis of data regarding universities' work culture.

The Competing Values framework characterises organisational culture into the four categories of Clan, Adhocracy, Market and Hierarchy, based on the level of flexibility and focus exercised in organisations. The competing values explored in this framework are organisational focus, viewed in terms of being internal or external; and organisational structure, viewed in terms of being flexible or controlled (Yu & Wu,

2009). This framework characterised organisational culture into the following four categories:

Clan: This type of organisational culture is characterised by a high degree of flexibility, with internal focus. Leaders in such organisations are often perceived as guiding figures.

Adhocracy: In this type of organisational culture, there is a high degree of flexibility, but the focus is external. Such organisations are readily adaptable to dynamic business environments.

Market: There is the element of external focus in this type of organisational culture, but with a degree of control attached. Such organisations are very result orientated and highly competitive in their functionalities.

Hierarchy: This type of organisational culture bears a high degree of control, with the focus being internal as well. Such organisations are characterised by a well-defined framework of policies and procedures.

While the characteristics suggested by O' Reilly III, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) focused on organisations' employees and the role they played in the formation of workplace culture; the cultural framework suggested by Deal and Kennedy (1982) laid more emphasis on the organisations' role in forming the workplace culture and its influence on the respective employees. This contrast indicates the diversity of views

on culture that has emerged from different researchers, underlining the width of the subject itself.

CULTURE IN NATIONS

National cultures are known to shape the cultures of organisations that function in those respective countries (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Fey and Denison (2003) identified the need to study the influence of national cultures on organisational cultures. The 'Dimensions of Culture' questionnaire is a significant framework (Northhouse, 2012, p. 301). This questionnaire is an adapted form of the items used in GLOBE studies to access the dimensions of culture (House et al., 2004). From its inception in 1993, the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project has aimed at conducting studies across various cultures, with inputs from 825 organisations in 62 countries (Robbins et al., 2012). This is achieved by identifying nine diverse dimensions on which the respective national cultures are different from each other (House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001). These dimensions are namely, assertiveness, future orientation, gender differentiation, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism/collectivism, in-group collectivism, performance orientation and humane orientation.

A comprehensive model to study the cultural aspect has been developed by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), by taking into account the influence of national culture on organisational culture; viz. person v/s task orientation and centralised v/s decentralised structures of organisations. The four diverse organisational cultures identified here are namely, Guided missile, Eiffel tower, Familial and Incubator, based on the level people orientation and the structure of the organisations.

This study also explored the influence of national culture on workplace bullying in Australian academia. The literature reviewed discussed different scholarly views (e.g. House et al., 2004; Northouse, 2012; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012) to categorise national culture. For the purpose of this study, the researcher opted for Trompenaars typology of culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012) as a frame. This model of cultural diversity takes into account the influence of national culture on organisational culture; viz. orientation to the person or task and centralised v/s decentralised structures of organisations, which are discussed below:

Guided Missile: This culture is dominated by a project- oriented approach, with the strategy of result orientation, through practical solutions and multi-disciplinary teamwork; for instance, in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Eiffel Tower: This is a role orientated and hierarchy based culture, with the top down style of management being predominant; for instance, in France and Germany. Australia, the context of this study, mainly exhibits the features of the ‘Eiffel tower culture’, which is more role-oriented than task-oriented, despite being hierarchy-based.

Familial: This is a power-oriented culture, with a predominant family approach and deep sense of concern for all members; for instance, in Japan and Belgium.

Incubator: This culture is characterised by an egalitarian structure, with individual freedom to improvise, where all contributing members are seen as co-creators; for example, the Silicon Valley work culture in the United States.

This study was exploratory in nature and the various cultural frameworks were reviewed in a broader sense, to provide an overview of existing academic viewpoints on culture. These various frameworks demonstrate the plurality of the nature of culture. All the frameworks are distinguished by their very distinct, yet practical typologies and terminologies, which are developed by the individual creators of these frameworks. Subsequently, the role of perception is indicated in these frameworks, as culture and its perception are subjective in nature and may vary from an individual to an individual and from a place to a place. The above frameworks, even though being different in nature, point out that this subjectivity of cultural perceptions is a common ground between various cultural frameworks; a view supported by Omari and Sharma (2016).

2.1.5 THE PERPETRATORS

The reasons why bullying occurs can be diverse (Ryan, 2016) and may be interrelated to the characteristics of the perpetrator (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009). Hodgins, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara (2014) postulate that there can be a variety of perpetrators of bullying, ranging from peers to supervisors as well as subordinates. Researchers (e.g. Rodriguez-Munoz et al., 2010; Simpson & Cohen, 2004) highlighted the role played by demographic factors; especially gender (Dentith, Wright, & Coryell, 2015; Salin, 2015; Salin & Hoel, 2013; Yamada, Cappadocia, & Pepler, 2014) in workplace bullying. van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007), and Hollis (2014), suggested age as being another reason, which may induce some

individuals to bully those who are younger than them in the workplace (Anjum & Shoukat, 2013; McCormack, Djurkovic, & Casimir, 2014). While the majority of research conducted in the field of workplace bullying has been focussed on the victims of the behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2011b), scholarly attention has recently been more focussed on the perpetrators of bullying (Omari, 2007; Paull et al., 2012).

Perpetrators can come from an array of backgrounds. For instance, previous research (Omari, 2007) indicated that bullying arises when, those who are pushy enough to drive themselves and others to achieve goals, are considered to be above censure from the organisation's perspective. Even when such individuals turn to bullying others to achieve their ends, their behaviours are endured at the organisational level (Francioli et al., 2016). Further as a tactic, the perpetrator, by sabotaging the work performance of a co-worker, may try to advance their own position (Salin, 2003b). The contemporary scholarly attention on the perpetrators of bullying is focused on understanding the reasons why they would engage in bullying behaviours in the first place (Berlingieri, 2015), as this may be a key to fully exploring the nature and causes of the behaviour.

Workplace bullying has been referred to as a result of adverse interactions between individuals with different mindsets, and is often viewed as an issue between the perpetrator and the victim (Johnson, 2011). A widespread notion across the working cultures is that aggressive and bullying individuals tend to rise to the top (Pilch & Turska, 2015), because their dominance is generally misconstrued as leadership (Boddy, 2011; Peng, Chen, Chang, Zhuang, & Nickson, 2016), which makes them stand out from the others (Harvey, Treadway, & Heames, 2007; Nielsen, 2013).

Subsequently, some organisations view bullying as proficient means of accomplishing objectives, and this encourages its potential perpetrators to engage in such behaviours (Salin, 2003b).

The creation of a constructive and suitable work environment has to commence from the organisation's senior levels (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). This aspect is critical as the organisational culture can be a determining factor in the survival or failure of an organisation. For instance, the aggressive organisational culture at Enron in the 1990s, with its inexorable pressure on its executives to swiftly increase profitability, encouraged ethical lapses and ultimately contributed to the company's collapse in 2001 (Byrne, 2002). Even after such occurrences, management styles described as tough, no nonsense, and hard as nails, are applauded in boardrooms and are often code words for a bully boss. The potential perpetrator identifies and masters these manoeuvres to evolve into a full-fledged bully (Glendinning, 2001). Tough management, therefore, may be projected as a euphemism for bullying (Harvey et al., 2007; McAvoy & Murtagh, 2003).

INSTITUTIONAL BULLYING

Hoel and Beale (2006) contended that bullies can either be individuals (like the organisation's senior leadership, bosses, subordinates and peers); or they can be the organisations themselves, which through their framework of sly policies and directives, tend to bully an individual worker or a group of workers (Berlingieri, 2015), also termed as "institutional bullying" (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2014, p. 3). The latter implicitly induces that workplace bullying forms an unstated element of the organisational culture (Harvey et al., 2007; Pilch & Turska, 2015). There is also a growing acknowledgment that workplace environment theatres a role in promoting

bullying at work (Hoel & Beale, 2006; Salin, 2015). Although management has diminutive control over an individual's characteristics, except in staffing and promotion decisions, work environment factors are, to an advanced scale, under the management's command, which may wield substantial influence, for example, on remuneration systems (Salin, 2003b) and job design (Oldham & Fried, 2016).

In such an adverse environment, bullying in the workplace may tend to have an effect on the customers and other stakeholders, like suppliers, collaborators and the general society as a whole (Tepper & Henle, 2011). Moreover, bullying behaviours may go past colleague-on-colleague mistreatment and become tacitly conventional, or even an encouraged aspect of the organisation's culture (Cowie et al., 2002; Pilch & Turska, 2015). The above, along with the lack of remedial measures and dearth of alternative employment avenues (Glambek et al., 2014), may incline the targeted individuals to believe that it is in their best interest to silently suffer this ill treatment (Hogh et al., 2011).

2.1.6 OCCURENCES

Bullying behaviours can take place in a variety of situations and circumstances (Hollis, 2015). Einarsen et al. (2011) suggested that perpetrator's intent is neither a primary concern nor an imperative parameter for identifying bullying and need not be established to rationalise the occurrence of the bullying behaviour. Further, Keashly and Nowell (2003), and Jensen, Patel, and Raver (2014) postulated that bullying can occur at micro level, when an individual feels threatened by another individual, in terms of performance, credibility or standing (Devonish, 2013). Bullying can also occur when individuals want to forcefully establish their supremacy over others to secure their desired career advancement (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015). Keashly and

Nowell (2003) concluded that in bullying situations, a control discrepancy either exists at the time of its commencement or develops over time. The two major factors which may influence the occurrence of bullying are diversity (Bergbom, Vartia-Vaananen, & Kinnunen, 2015) and leadership (Woodrow & Guest, 2017), which have been discussed in turn below:

DIVERSITY

Another paradigm shift that is gradually setting in, is the growing diversity in the workplaces. Scholars (e.g. Hentschel, Meir, Wegge, & Kearney, 2013; Sidle, 2010) posit that workers are progressively spending an increasing amount of time collaborating in diverse, global work environments, which have key differences in values, perceptions, and belief systems. Perpetrators, can therefore be, colloquially referred to as equal opportunity abusers (LaVan & Martin, 2008). The pressures of the composite global economy has noticeably increased the scenarios in which managers from one culture are called on to guide work groups and teams composed of members from different cultures (Tavakoli, Keenan, & Crnjak-Karanovic, 2003). Further research on bullying is needed, both across organisational cultures (Pilch & Turska, 2015) and in multicultural work settings (Jacobson et al., 2014; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007), to understand how diversity may be facilitating the occurrence of this behaviour (Omari & Sharma, 2016).

Furthermore, Harvey et al. (2006) suggested that, while the value of workforce diversity is difficult to question, over emphasising the uniqueness among the workforce creates divisions that can result in activities which can be termed as bullying. For instance, in the United States, workplace bullying is thrice more widespread than unlawful and prejudiced harassment (Namie & Namie, 2006). Omari

(2007) found that diversity may be one of the imminent causes for bullying behaviour to transpire. The majority of literature on diversity has laid emphasis on factual differences among work groups, such as age, gender, tenure, educational specialisation, functional background as well as the workplace culture (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). In view of globalisation, diversity is not only inescapable, but also to a wide extent, desirable as it broadens the pool of potentially work relevant resources (Hentschel et al., 2013) and develops “cross-cultural competence” (Omari & Sharma, 2016, p. 51) amongst organisations’ workforce .

LEADERSHIP

Researchers (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015; Francioli et al., 2016) suggested that workers may label an organisation and its leadership as the perpetrator rather than any individual, and that an organisation may feel confident to indulge in an oppressive style of management; as it is aware of its employees’ lack of remedial recourses or the absence of alternate sources of employment (Glambek et al., 2014). Laschinger, Wong, and Grau (2012) developed a model to signify the role played by organisational leadership or management in determining how individual workers react and cope with workplace bullying. The model is illustrated in the figure below (Figure 5):

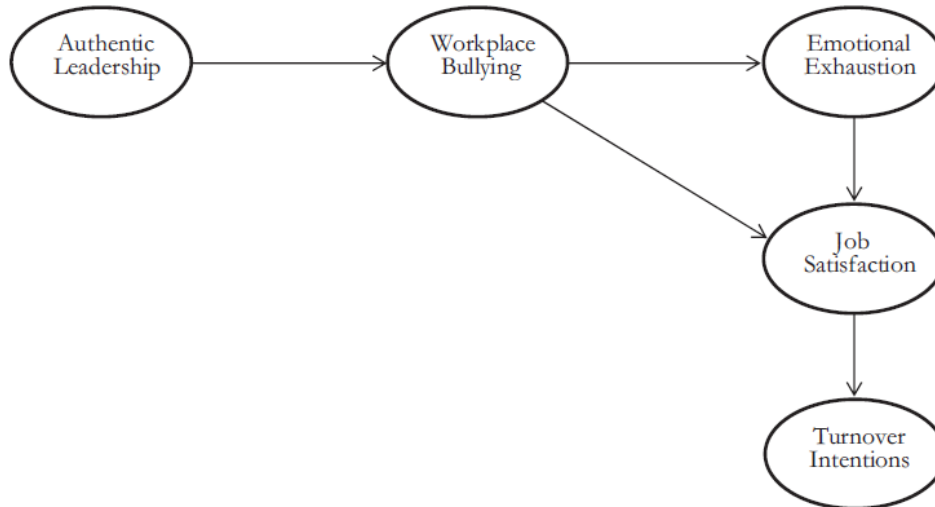


Figure 5: Influence of leadership on workplace bullying (Laschinger et al., 2012, p. 1270)

Laschinger et al. (2012) chiefly demonstrate that it is organisational leadership's stand on workplace bullying, which determines how victims would react and cope with the behaviour; a view also supported by Nielsen (2013). The key element established is of the leadership being authentic in its approach towards bullying (Laschinger & Fida, 2014), demonstrating a consistent stance on the issue (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2014). This would not only in-still strength in the victims, but will also prevent the behaviour from occurring in the first place (Kemp, 2014). A zero-tolerance approach to bullying may also implicitly result in increasing job satisfaction among employees (Loh et al., 2010), as they would perceive that their interests are protected and well-being is prioritised at the organisational level (Galanaki & Papalexandris, 2013). In contrast, it is theorised that if the organisational leadership is not firm in its stance against bullying (Francioli et al., 2016), it may result in victims feeling emotionally distraught (Park & Ono, 2016). Victims may also consider leaving the organisation due to the bullying (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, et al., 2016), increasing the organisations' employee turnover (Glambek et al., 2014).

Lack of sensitivity towards workers being bullied, can provide the organisational leadership a dictatorial outlook towards its employees (Francioli et al., 2016) which may result in the occurrence of workplace bullying at the organisational level. Bullying can occur between managers and their subordinates as well as between peers at the same level in the organisation (Glaser, Neilsen, & Einarsen, 2009; Zapf & Einarsen, 2011). Researchers (e.g. D'Cruz et al., 2014; Lewis & Rayner, 2003; Ritzman, 2016) illustrated that superior-subordinate bullying, also known as downward bullying (Forsell, 2016; Tsuno & Kawakami, 2015), can be viewed as a product of contemporary human resource management or other organisational practices. Cowan (2012) and D'Cruz et al. (2014) indicate that an organisation's human resource management practices may inherently possess the prescribed behavioural patterns, which may be conducive to the incidence of workplace bullying (Harrington, Warren, & Rayner, 2015).

On exceptional occasions, bullying can also occur upwards (Nicholls, 2015; Thirlwall, 2015), wherein a manager is bullied by the staff or a member of staff (Birks, Budden, Stewart, & Chapman, 2014; Branch, Sheehan, Barker, & Ramsay, 2004; Einarsen et al., 2011a). In some cases even subordinates, especially if collaborating in a group (Shabazz, Parry-Smith, Oates, Henderson, & Mountfield, 2016), may assemble enough clout to bully a supervisor (Salin, 2003b). Zapf et al. (2003) contended that geographical isolation or disparity in individual characteristics, may result in a situation, wherein a manager becomes more susceptible to upwards bullying. Usually, occurrences of upwards bullying are seldom reported (Rayner & Cooper, 2003; Shabazz et al., 2016).

Martin, Gray, and Adam (2007), and Glaso et al. (2009) identified bullying as also being horizontal, wherein individuals at the same level in the organisation engage in bullying behaviours. Horizontal bullying is prevalent in countries which have low power distance and a high degree of individualism (Cicerali & Cicerali, 2016), like Australia (Becher & Visovsky, 2012). Omari (2007), in her study on bullying behaviours in Australian public sector, reported that a third of bullies were peers of their victims, illustrating the prevalence of horizontal bullying. Public sector may be viewed as being similar to higher education sector, in terms of hierarchical organisational structures, bureaucracy, power imbalance and having a large workforce.

Kelly (2006) and Hoel et al. (2011) referred to workplace bullying as a problem, which is expensive for organisations and the individual victims. Bullying in the working sphere dually affects an employee's well-being, and group performance (Samnani, 2013b). This behaviour may be adjudged as the situation wherein the less powerful employee, who is often not capable of defending themselves, is subjected to experience persistent negative behaviours perpetrated by one or more individuals (Einarsen et al., 2011b). Research, for instance in the Australian healthcare industry (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2010; McCormack, Djurkovic, & Casimir, 2014), has indicated towards misuse of power, which forms an integral component of the bullying behaviour. Healthcare industry may be observed as being parallel to higher education, the focus sector for this study, in terms of various organisational aspects of being bureaucratic, publicly funded and being large organisational setups, with strong inherent workplace cultures. Johnson (2011) suggests that perpetrators, in such work

environments, use their formal authority on designated processes, like performance reviews, to bully the less powerful targeted individuals.

2.1.7 WORKPLACE BULLYING IN ACADEMIA

The main focus of this study is to understand bullying behaviours in academia in the Australian context, which is largely unexplored. While researching workplace bullying in the American higher education sector, Hollis (2015) states that the behaviour has adverse impacts; not only for the workforce (LaSala, Wilson, & Sprunk, 2016), but also on the overall quality of education delivered (Locke & Bennion, 2013). Keashly and Neuman (2010) observed that organisational features of higher education institutions world-wide, like power imbalances, may contribute to the high incidence of bullying behaviours. Gallant (2011) suggests that bullying behaviours in these institutions can be accredited to the changes in their structures and governance, making them susceptible to such behaviours. In their study on workplace bullying in Turkish universities, Tigrel and Kokolan (2009) postulated that high pressure of performance and ambiguous evaluation systems having subjective criteria, also provided conducive environment for bullying to occur. Keashly and Neuman (2010) supported this view, adding that workers in supervisory positions may misuse such discretionary systems as a way to bully others.

Zabrodska and Kveton (2013), in their study in the Czech Republic, contend that apart from organisational features, the changes in the functioning of higher education institutions have also led to an increase in bullying behaviours. Thornton (2004), and Shin and Jung (2014) observed that corporatisation of universities have transformed them from being institutions of public service into profit making organisations; a view also echoed by Zabrodska et al. (2014). Wilkesmann and Schmid (2012) postulate that

workforce in such academic institutions are largely motivated by corporate objectives of increasing profitability; whereas delivering quality education becomes a secondary task (Shin & Jung, 2014). Researchers (e.g. Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014; Twale & De Luca, 2008) stated that such corporate-style governance of higher education institutions has given rise to individualism and a high degree of competitiveness among its workers; creating circumstances which provoke incidents of bullying (Lee Gloor, 2014). Zabrodska and Kveton (2013) endorses this view and state that these changes have made work environments in these institutions toxic, increasing the probability of bullying behaviours to occur.

Schafferer and Szanajda (2013) state that another key change in higher education sector around the world is the significant cuts in government funding to academic institutions, Australia is no different. Hollis (2015) accredits the recent cuts in university funding, as one of the major reasons for an increase in bullying behaviours in higher education institutions. The reduced public funding in these institutions has resulted in diminished resources, higher teaching and research loads, casual employment (Nadolny & Ryan, 2015), short-term contracts (Desrochers & Kirshstein, 2014; Nicholls, 2014), all adding the element of insecurity among the sector's workforce (Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013). In terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), some jobs, like non-permanent appointments, may not be designed to provide a sense of security required to sustain good mental health. Hollis (2015) identifies this uncertainty as a major triggering factor that may incite bullying behaviours among employees. Schafferer and Szanajda (2013) observe that academic institutions around the world have become more prone to bullying behaviour in light of these organisational changes (Shin & Jung, 2014).

Lester (2013) observes that bullying behaviours in the higher education sector need to be researched further. Various studies (e.g. Bjorkqvist et al., 1994; Giorgi, 2012; Hollis, 2015; Keashly & Neuman, 2008; Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, & Beneke, 2009; Lewis, 2004; McCarthy, Mayhew, Barker, & Sheehan, 2003; McKay et al., 2008; Metzger et al., 2015; Simpson & Cohen, 2004; Skinner et al., 2015) have illustrated that workplace bullying is widespread in higher education institutions. While Skinner et al. (2015) give prominence to individuals' perception in identifying a behaviour as bullying, Giorgi (2012) contends that such behaviours may create a negative work environment in universities. Nonetheless, scholars (e.g. Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Lester, 2013; Skinner et al., 2015) observe that bullying is steadily increasing in academia globally. In the views of Hollis (2015), further research is still needed to fully comprehend this behaviour and its causal factors, to ameliorate against the behaviour.

2.1.8 THE AFTERMATH

Study findings (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011a; Hurley et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014) indicate that workplace bullying is a very significant issue, having widespread consequences for both the individuals affected and the organisations they work in (Buttigieg et al., 2011; Rissi et al., 2016); with repercussions for the community beyond (Omari, 2007). Glambek et al. (2014), and Einarsen et al. (2011a) observed that bullying behaviour results in adverse consequences for the targeted victims, making them feel insecure in their jobs; and organisations need to acknowledge the behaviour in order to curb it (Lutgen-Sandvik & Arsht, 2014). Park and Ono (2016) proposed a model to depict the aftermath of workplace bullying, wherein an individual's perception of job insecurity

due to being bullied, is identified to have a primary role in determining the consequences of bullying. The model is illustrated in Figure 6:

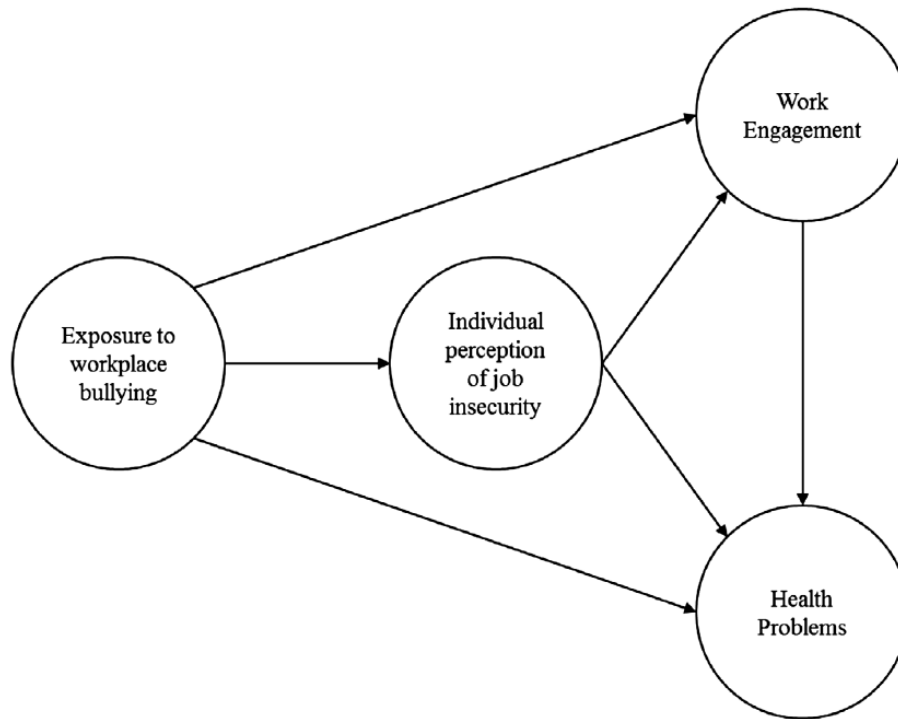


Figure 6: Effects of workplace bullying (Park & Ono, 2016, p. 2)

Park and Ono (2016) mainly focus on the role played by the perceptions of job insecurity, which an individual victim experiences due to being bullied at work. They chiefly theorise that it is this insecurity which leads to decreased work engagement, resulting in lower organisational productivity; a view also supported by Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, et al. (2016). At an individual level, victims suffer from health problems (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015), which impacts their physical (Salin, 2015) as well as psychological well-being (Schweder, Quinlan, Bohle, Lamm, & Ang, 2015). Workplace bullying frequently results in high deterrent costs for individual victims (Carter et al., 2013), in terms of their productivity (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, et al., 2016) and personal well-being (Kara, Kim, & Uysal, 2015; Kwan et al., 2016; Wagner,

Barnes, & Scott, 2014). Research (e.g. D'Cruz & Noronha, 2010; Goodboy, Martin, Knight, & Long, 2017; Pilch & Turska, 2015; Qureshi, Rasli, & Zaman, 2014; Scott, Zagenczyk, Schippers, Purvis, & Cruz, 2014) has established that the organisation is critical in determining the outcome of the victims' coping response.

Findings from the literature (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Han & Ha, 2016; Hogh et al., 2011; Kemp, 2014) suggest that victims endure behavioural, physical, psychological, monetary and social consequences. In addition, victims report reducing effort (Ford, Myrden, Kelloway, Coffey, & Takahashi, 2016; Power et al., 2013), seeking counselling (Gardner et al., 2013) and medication (Lallukka, Haukka, Partonen, Rahkonen, & Lahelma, 2012; O'Donnell & MacIntosh, 2016), taking time off to avoid the bully (Eriksen, Hogh, & Hansen, 2016), availing employee assistance programs (Bophela & Govender, 2015; Compton & McManus, 2015), or leaving the organisation (Lutgen-Sandvik & Arsht, 2014); which may result in significantly diminishing the organisation's productivity and profitability (Harvey, Heames, Richey & Leonard, 2006). The consequences of bullying on the victim enumerate a number of negative health conditions (Nielsen et al., 2014; O'Driscoll et al., 2016); such as clinically relevant anxiety, depression, extreme stress, sleep disturbance (Hansen, Hogh, Garde, & Persson, 2014; Magee et al., 2015), loss of self-confidence (Laschinger & Nosko, 2015) and a disturbing sense of helplessness (Güngör & Açıkalın, 2016; Hogh et al., 2011) and work-life imbalance (Shin & Jung, 2014). Various researchers (e.g. Karatuna & Gok, 2014; Malinauskiene & Einarsen, 2014; Nielsen et al., 2015; Rodriguez-Munoz et al., 2010) have also found victims to suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, like nervousness, insomnia and memory problems (Spence Laschinger & Nosko, 2015).

Sloan, Matyok, and Schmitz (2010), and Lutgen-Sandvik, Hood, and Jacobson (2016), contended that bullying experiences may also result in positive outcomes for some victims, based on how they respond to the behaviour. Similar observations were made by Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007), who contended that victims' resilience played a role in determining how they coped with being bullied at work. Heugten (2012) found that some bullying victims developed resilience in their selves, as an involuntary reaction to being bullied. Resilience did not only help victims to cope with bullying (Maidaniuc-Chirilă, 2015), it also aided them to effectively deal with any associated stress they faced post the bullying experience (O'Donnell, MacIntosh, & Wuest, 2010). Heugten (2012) accredited this resilience and a sense of becoming a stronger individual post bullying, as an unexpected outcome of the behaviour. Sloan et al. (2010), however, observed that much scholarly attention has been given to the negative consequences of bullying, leaving the positive role of resilience largely unexplored.

It can be summarised that workplace bullying results in adverse consequences for organisations as a whole (Georgakopoulos et al., 2011). Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) highlighted the consequences of workplace bullying for organisations, as illustrated in Figure 7:

Organizational impacts				
Productivity	Cost	Culture	Legal	Reputation
Absenteeism	Health plan increase	Climate	Wrongful discharge lawsuits	Customer relations
Decreased performance	Recruiting	Ineffective interpersonal relationships (peers/supervisors)		
Employees use of time	Turnover/retention	Ineffective teamwork		
Loss of creative potential	Worker attrition	Lowered morale		
Missed deadlines	Worker compensation claims	Organizational commitment		
Workplace errors		Work environment		

Figure 7: Organisational impacts of workplace bullying (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011, p. 76)

The above figure depicts workplace bullying having adverse impact on the organisational productivity, cost-effectiveness, culture, reputation, along with possibly incurring legal costs (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). Exploring the nature of workplace bullying is of great importance for organisations (Rhodes et al., 2010), especially higher education institutions (Skinner et al., 2015), as its aftermath may result in expensive lawsuits, loss of valued staff, diminished productivity and public image (Cleary, Walter, Horsfall, & Jackson, 2013; Yildirim, 2009). Lester (2013) contends that workplace bullying may also adversely affect the quality of education provided to students. Increasing attention is also being paid to the prevalence of workplace bullying (Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016); and its repercussions for individuals, groups and organisations (Hoel & Giga, 2006; Nielsen et al., 2014). Previous research (e.g. Høgh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2014), has put forward that exposure to bullying behaviours, has overwhelming negative

consequences on the physical health; as well as overall well-being of the individuals concerned (Gardner et al., 2016; Johnson, 2009). Such behaviours may also have overwhelming effects on the targeted individuals, in the terms of their psychological well-being (Hogh et al., 2011).

It has also been observed that bullying is disadvantageous to organisational performance (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, et al., 2016), as bullying is not only aimed at the victim, but also latently affects the witnesses (Escartin, Zapf, et al., 2011). Research (e.g. Trach, Hymel, & Waterhouse, 2010) has indicated that bullying is a group progression, involving both the victim and the witnesses. Paull et al. (2012) have provided a typology of witnesses, based on their response to viewing bullying behaviours, which may vary from instigating the behaviour to completely avoiding, to getting involved. Studies (e.g. Burnes & Pope, 2007; Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg, & Jensen, 2013) have consistently established that workplace bullying is associated with increased level of strain for both victims and witnesses. This results in both, the victim and the witnesses, to suffer from lifelong impacts of the bullying experience (Chen & Park, 2015; Keashly & Harvey, 2005). Such hostility may even gradually become naturalised (Pilch & Turska, 2015) and taken for granted (Hearn & Parkin, 2001). It may be suggested that an organisation's culture may play a decisive role in the occurrence or prevention of workplace bullying (Baillien, Neyens, & De Witte, 2011; Salin, 2015), which is discussed further in the chapter.

2.2 THE AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

This study explored workplace bullying in the Australian higher education. An overview of this sector would provide a background of the environmental dynamics, in which the bullying behaviours were explored. The Australian higher education

sector is unique in its subtleties. This section begins with an introduction to the sector, followed by a summary of the various transformations the sector has undergone. Major emphasis has been laid upon New Public Management (NPM) (Dan & Pollitt, 2015) in the Australian context, which has revolutionised the governance of higher education. This aspect subsequently influences the behaviours of this sector's workforce, making the discussion relevant to this study. Although workplace bullying predates NPM, recent studies (e.g. Omari & Paull, 2017) have underlined the role NPM plays in enabling workplace bullying to occur and continue. Similar views are also held by Farr-Wharton, Shacklock, Brunetto, Teo, and Farr-Wharton (2017) and Mawdsley and Lewis (2017); further warranting its discussion in this study. The section concludes with a summary of the recent changes that Australian higher education sector has witnessed.

2.2.1 AN INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Australia had 37 public and two private universities and approximately 130 other higher education providers (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014), employing approximately 183,000 workers in 2016 (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016). The higher education sector plays a very significant role in the Australian economy by the virtue of its financial contribution (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016), resulting in it being colloquially termed as the higher education industry rather than a sector. In its 2014 report on Australian higher education, Granttan Institute (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014) stated that this sector generated a gross revenue of \$27 billion, making it the third largest industry and fourth largest export of the Australian economy. The domestic student enrolments exceeded one million for the first time in 2014. An upsurge in international enrolments also occurred, with China emerging as the single largest provider of international

students to Australian higher education institutions. For delivering higher education, the country has a workforce of 53,000 full time equivalent staff, who are supported by a large number of casually engaged tutors and sessional lecturers (Norton & Cakitaki, 2016).

2.2.2 CHANGES IN THE SECTOR

A very distinguishing feature of Australian higher education sector is its dynamics of control, which can be classified as legislative and financial in nature. The dual polarity of control comes from the fact that various states exercise legislative control over the higher educational sector, while the financial accountability remains with the Commonwealth (Favaloro, 2015). Each of successive Australian governments to date have, however, implemented and ensured the continuity of such measures, which have ensured that the Commonwealth has a significant domination in the planning and financial regulating of the sector (Coates et al., 2008). This polarity of control has resulted in a number of progressive changes in the sector, which has not only reformed the way it functions, but also re-defined the functioning of the people who constitute the sector's workforce.

Retrospectively, these changes can be divided into three distinct phases (Australian Department of Education, 2009). The higher education sector, as Australia itself, has significantly evolved since World War II. Beginning in the 1950s, the first phase witnessed the creation of new universities across the country. This was primarily to give Australia a robust educational structure to educate its population. The second phase, from 1960 to 1970s was a crucial moment in the history of the Australian higher education sector, as degree granting colleges of advanced education were established to complement the existing universities. A binary arrangement of advanced learning

was created in the nation, along with a welcomed abolition of university fees. This may be attributed as a main phase, as it witnessed the introduction of free education by the Gough Whitlam Government, which abolished the tuition fees for students at universities and technical colleges, as well as established the Commonwealth's responsibility for university funding throughout Australia (Whitlam Institute at Western Sydney University, 2015).

The third phase succeeded the reforms of the Whitlam government, by furthering the cause of accessible education for all Australians. Starting in the 1980s, this phase ushered the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), by the then Education Minister John Dawkins, and was primarily aimed at providing easy yet earned access to education for all, irrespective of their financial standings. It may be suggested that this single innovative scheme transformed the entire character of the Australian higher education sector. Post the Dawkins reforms, there has been a significant increase in the student population amounting to a 107 percent -rise approximately (Coates et al., 2009).

Beginning in the 1990s, the sector has undergone further transformations which came in the form of increased student enrolments. Successive governments of the era, attempted to regulate as well as cope with this change, by encouraging the higher educational institutions to operate more like market driven organisations (Bishop, 2006). This was one of the key underpinnings, which led the institutions to explore overseas destinations for students recruitment (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016) and laid the foundation for internationalisation of Australian higher education (Coates et al., 2008; Favaloro, 2015; Margison, 2015).

The new system of regulation and management of the Australian higher education sector has had an exceptional impact on the working of the very sector and its staff. The Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (2016) suggests that the amount of pressure generated by this new market based regulation of Australian higher education has led staff to be more apprehensive about their jobs (Metzger et al., 2015). This has, to an extent, deviated their previously undivided attention from sole academic and service pursuits for providing quality education (Shin & Jung, 2014); to the more complex dynamics of internal competition and survival in a sector, with uncertainty as a key characteristic (Teichler, 2011).

2.3 NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (NPM)

From the late twentieth century, management and delivery of public services across the globe has been subject to change (Bergh, Friberg, Persson, & Dahlborg-Lyckhage, 2015) and this has continued in the twenty first century (Kuhlman, 2010; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000). These strategic changes have gathered scholarly attention (Kuipers et al., 2014) and have been a subject of considerable debate among academics (e.g. Bergh et al., 2015; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Favaloro, 2015; Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014). Along with revolutionary changes in the manner of delivery for social services and accounting for government expenditures (Elzinga, 2012; Pick et al., 2015), the global public administration reforms from the late 1970s also resulted in changes in structures of governance (Ewalt, 2001). These reforms towards marketisation and application of business management theories to the domain of public administration (O'Neill, 2009) came to be referred as New Public Management (hereafter referred to as NPM) (Tolofari, 2005). It is imperative to deliberate upon NPM in this chapter, as

it is equally relevant in its implications in higher education (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014); as it is in other sectors (Maasen & Stensaker, 2005).

2.3.1 THE ORIGINS OF NPM

The reasons for the genesis of NPM are as debatable (Tolofari, 2005) as its applications has been historically (Bleiklie, 1998). Kizza (2000) dates the first wave of these administrative reforms to the second half of the nineteenth century in Britain, followed by a second wave in the United States in the 1930s for which industrial revolution has been identified as a driver. These successive waves transformed the way routine business was carried out in the public sector, which had benchmarked these reforms.

Research community however, is divided in its opinion about NPM's chronological beginnings. Ferlie, Pettigrew, Ashburner and Fitzgerald (1996) have dated NPM to a more recent timeline of 1971-87, citing the policy changes in Britain. This timeline has been reinforced by other authors (e.g. Fusarelli & Johnson, 2004), who stated that then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher first introduced the practices of NPM, by self-assuming the role of a policy entrepreneur. The majority of literature (Bovaird & Loffler, 2001; Fusarelli & Johnson, 2004; McTavish, 2003; Nikos, 2000) places the beginnings of NPM at the end of 1970s or the mid-1980s. The rationale behind this variation in the time line can be attributed to the ripple effects that NPM had across the nations. Ferlie et al. (1996) were of the opinion that NPM began in the UK, as a series of reforms in public sector governance, wherein the corporate style of control trickled from the top level and was sustained at the lower levels over a long period of time, affirming its permanence.

The British origins of NPM, have however been sternly contested by the researchers in the United States, who trace the roots of NPM to the policy changes in the country. Cohen and Eimicke (1998) suggested that NPM originated in the USA in 1980s, as a result of drastic changes in American government ethics which led to increased commercial governance of the public sector. The majority of research community, although divided in its view about NPM's origins, unanimously agrees that these changes became most apparent in the 1980s and were predominantly consequential to governance structures and processes in the public sector (Tolofari, 2005). Some authors (e.g. Cohen & Eimicke, 1998) even suggested that USA was enthused by the success of NPM in the UK and this led to introduction of similar reforms in the US public sector domain.

A section of the research community also posits that the conservative electoral victories of Ronald Reagan in USA in 1978 and Margaret Thatcher in UK in 1979, may be termed as key events that laid the foundations of new corporate governance of public sectors (Larbi, 1999). This political viewpoint is, however, contradicted in New Zealand, wherein it was the Labour government that heralded the new public sector reforms (Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996). Correspondingly, it was the succeeding Democrat government of Bill Clinton in USA and the Labour government of Tony Blair in the UK, that continued with the reforms (Tolofari, 2005). This suggests that NPM may have initially originated as a brain child of political ideology, but it sustained on its merit of efficiency and result orientation (Larbi, 1999).

Lynn Jr. (2009) postulated that the NPM having originated in the UK and the USA in the 1970-80s, influenced the policy makers across Europe, Australia and New

Zealand, resulting in efficiency driven yet politically inspired managerial reforms in these nations' public sectors. Moreover, during the 1980s, there was a move in a number of OCED (Organisation of Economic and Social Development) countries towards this new form of public sector governance (Hood, 1995). The replicated NPM reforms in Africa and Latin America were a result of the then existing economic and fiscal conditions in the region, which led to resultant community demands for public sector reforms (Kizza, 2000). A parallel situation was persisting in Japan, wherein widespread corruption and mismanagement in the public sector led to similar reforms being implemented (Yamamoto, 2003). The above critical analysis of the literature suggests that the advent of NPM in UK and USA had successive implications across the world.

2.3.2 NPM - GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

NPM is viewed as a global phenomenon (Kuhlman, 2010), as it spread from its countries of origin to other parts of the world, it influenced governance policies in the public sector (Pick et al., 2015), including higher education (Woodhall, Hiller, & Resnick, 2014), both in the developed as well developing world (Tolofari, 2005). From the late 20th century, universities across the developed countries experienced gradual yet significant changes in their structures and management styles (Parker, 2011). Marginson and Rhoades (2002) suggested that academic research on globalisation processes in higher education, however, was under-studied.

With the advent of NPM globally, higher education around the world has witnessed a shift in its style and mode of governance (Shin & Jung, 2014), which is more towards corporate style marketisation (Ferlie, Musselin, & Andresani, 2008). Research suggest that most countries viewed NPM as a compromise between academic autonomy and

state regulation (Young, 2002), with scholars (e.g. Dill, 2003) advocating for freedom of academic institutions from government control. Researchers (e.g. Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Ek, Ideland, Jonsson, & Malmberg, 2013; Favaloro, 2015) suggested that higher education has transformed in a market, rather than a sector, which is well established across the nations.

These changes may be due to the reformed expectations of the major consumer base of higher education, and the students (Woodhall et al., 2014) who view it as an investment into their future success (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002). Scholars (e.g. Deem & Brehony, 2005) have also suggested that students are influenced by the local social dynamics of the countries they live in. It is this element of public welfare in higher education which designates its governance, to the public sector domain (De Boer, Enders, & Leisyte, 2007). The efforts by various governments globally to enhance the governance style of higher education are based on the assumption that students, as informed consumers (Woodhall et al., 2014), will make informed selections based on the quality of education offered by the respective institutions (Baldwin & James, 2000). The idea of students being regarded as consumers, however, has met with some criticism from scholars. Brown and Oplatka (2006) contended that treating students in such a commercial manner, with the objective of financial profitability, can be counterproductive to the very aim of imparting education and should not be welcomed by higher education institutions.

Correspondingly, globalisation has also led students to venture out of their home countries to seek quality education abroad (Brown & Oplatka, 2006). This highlights the quest between various institutions to compete globally for increased student

enrolments from around the world (Pimpa, 2003). The resultant intense competition among institutions for gaining students, both nationally and internationally (Margison, 2015); also justified the call for corporate style, competitive governance of these institutions (Farr, 2003). The resultant competition has also compelled universities to equip themselves with necessary market intelligence tools (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014); to enable them to successfully meet the new challenges they face in the international market of higher education (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).

Predominantly, NPM is well established in major English speaking countries, including USA (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Maes, 2015), UK (Taylor, 2003), Canada (Young, 2002), Australia (Baldwin & James, 2000) and New Zealand (Ford, Joseph, & Joseph, 1999). Replicating these reforms, the respective governments have also implemented deregulatory strategies in Japan (Arimoto, 1997), Russia (Hare & Lugachev, 1999), Holland (Jongbloed, 2003), Spain (Mora, 1997), Israel (Oplatka, 2002) and China (Mok, 2000). On a macro level, NPM is gradually gaining a larger base in higher education domains in Asia (Gray, Fam, & Llanes, 2003), Africa (Maringe, 2004) and Eastern Europe (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002) as well.

2.3.3 EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE IN AUSTRALIA

The dawn of NPM globally has essentially transformed higher education governance in Australia (Favaloro, 2015), as it has around the world (Marginson, 2008). Research (e.g. Bosman et al., 2011) indicates that swift and intense changes in the Australian higher education domain have redefined the management style, structures and mode of education delivery at institutions across the nation. The rise of a global market place of education (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014), in which these institutions find themselves

competing (Dearn, 2006), can also be attributed as a contributory factor for NPM implementation (Pick, 2006). The Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (2016) in its report, noted that Australian higher education is primarily driven by the competition for student enrolments; where excellence in education becomes a tool to achieve this goal, rather than being the primary aim in itself (Favaloro, 2015; Rindfleish, 2003).

The literature (e.g. Bosman et al., 2011) suggests that such a corporate style governance of this sector, based on NPM, has led to sweeping changes within universities, student communities as well as planning academic communities. These changes can be attributed to a wider social change phenomenon, known as reflexive modernisation (Slantcheva, 2004). The concept of reflexive modernisation arose out of mutual academic collaboration between social analysts (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994) to explain the socio-economic drivers of change in public institutions and resultant government retorts to these changes. They observed that when the conventional institutions of government are faced with mounting contradictions of consumerism, they adopt a reflexive style of management to adapt to the newly formed environment, often characterised by rising marketisation and global capitalism (Beck et al., 1994); attributes which define the existing Australian higher education domain (Bosman et al., 2011).

With successive change in political regimes, Australian higher education has witnessed some momentous policy changes (Favaloro, 2015). The restructuring of Australian higher education in 1970s, which transformed itself from being an elite system to a mass one, led to funding pressures on universities to meet the increased student load (Davis, 2005). It has been estimated that student enrolments since 1984

have increased at the average rate of 57 percent (Gillard, 2009) and the public expenditure, relative to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), on higher education has been on a decline (Bosman et al., 2011). Although in 1981, the Commonwealth archetypally provided 90 percent of a public university's income, this percentage diminished to 40 percent in 2002, as universities could no longer be designated as public enterprises (Davis, 2006). To meet this funding deficit, higher education institutions were obligated to aggressively target overseas markets (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016) to gain higher fee paying international students (Atkins & Herfel, 2005; Margison, 2015). The global economic turndown has however, wedged severely on universities' investment in international education marketing (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016), returns from which had been instrumental in their operational budgets (Bosman et al., 2011).

The resultant complex environment in the Australian higher education domain has created an atmosphere of perpetual uncertainty (Parker, 2011). This has given rise to individualism (Pick, 2006), wherein both the academics and students, are bound to draw their own career paths (Marginson, 2008). Consequently, students are being compelled to carry their own financial burden for education (Brown & Oplatka, 2006), causing them to take advantage of the ensuing competition among various institutional offerings of double degrees (Bosman et al., 2011), diversified pathways and varied modes of course delivery (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016). For the academic staff in Australia, the rise of casual basis of employment as sessional academics (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016), has created an atmosphere of job insecurity (Marginson, 2008), with 40 percent to 50 percent of all academics being employed on a casual basis (Parker, 2011). Such volatile yet

competitive work settings in higher education domain may lead to a potent environment wherein bullying may not only occur (Ryan, Burgess, Connell, & Groen, 2013), but also be sustained (Skinner et al., 2015), as a survival strategy to safeguard oneself (McKay et al., 2008). Australian National Tertiary Education Union (2015, p. 16) in its “State of Uni Survey” report also highlighted bullying free workplaces as one of important aspects that contributes towards job satisfaction in the higher education sector.

2.4 RECENT SECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

The year 2008 proved to be yet another significant year in the narrative of the Australian higher education -sector. The year’s review of Australian higher education, popularly known as the Bradley Reforms (as it was led by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley, AC), proposed a competitive system, wherein in universities were encouraged to adopt a system in which their finances would be generated by competing for students, through a common allocation framework (King & James, 2013). The universities were expected to gain sustainable competitive advantages, through generating positive perceptions about themselves and their courses among the prospective students.

However, in 2010, international students’ enrolments collapsed, leading to numerous higher educational institutions going into loss, adding to the continuous decline in domestic income. Phillimore and Koshy (2010) suggested that there were multiple reasons for this deterioration, which can be attributed to the increased violent attacks on international students leading to reputational destruction of Australian higher education overseas, followed by immigration policy changes making student visas tougher to acquire. To add to the sector’s woes, the international student enrolments

reduced by 18.1 percent between 2009-2013 (Australian Education International, 2013) putting additional pressures on already stretched Universities and Schools, especially those highly reliant on international student income such as Business Schools.

Subsequently, the resultant new national demand driven funding policy ensured the uncapping of university places within every single university in Australia, leading to an increase in Commonwealth supported enrolments from 440,000 in 2009 to 541,000 in 2013. As a consequence, the government expenditure on Commonwealth supported places rose from \$4.6 billion to an estimated of \$7.2 billion for the year 2016 (Australian Government, 2014). Such unprecedented increase in expenditure led the government of the day to consider whether such a system, however socially propitious, is financially sustainable in the long run, leading the current Liberal government to introduce cost-cutting mechanisms in the existing system. Accordingly, the 2014-2015 national budget had a twin fold agenda to substantiate savings. The first one is to provide non-university providers (i.e. private educational providers as well as technical and further education institutions) access to Commonwealth supported places. The second prerogative was to allow providers of higher education to set their own uncapped values regarding student contribution components of those places (Dow, 2014). Building upon similar lines, the current 2017-2018 national budget also reduces AUS\$ 2.9 billion in funding to the higher education sector (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), exerting high pressure on the universities to deliver increased outputs with decreased resources. Although the government claims that such measures are aimed at creating a more sustainable higher education sector, the National Tertiary

Education Union (MacDonald, 2017) argues that such reduction in funding will only result in creating further uncertainty in the sector and insecurity amongst its workforce.

Margison (2015) contends that letting universities self-determine their uncapped values, may trigger severe competition among various higher educational institutions to attract more students, in order to increase enrolments and income. This fierce pressure may further have a ripple effect on the workforce, which may feel unwarrantedly coerced to meet tough targets. Research (e.g. Giorgi, 2012; McKay et al., 2008) indicates that financial uncertainties in the sector may lead to power struggles, which may be a triggering point for workplace bullying to occur.

Researchers (e.g. Amaral, 2003) have long reiterated that an individual's ability to adapt to instability and changing dynamics of control, is the key to survival in the Australian higher education sector (Favaloro, 2015). These factors have led to significant re-norming in the ways that the workforce, especially the academics work, not only with the students, but also among others in their professional field (Ek et al., 2013). Shin and Jung (2014) are of the opinion that many academics have modified their behaviours for corporate survival, in order to perform and survive in competitive universities; which, as Fredman and Doughney (2012) suggest, function more like a corporate houses, rather than institutions for higher education.

Researchers (e.g. Bordia & DiFonzo, 2013) further indicate that, with changing scenarios, employees are often challenged with insecurity about their own future. This perception has led to a widespread feeling of job uncertainty among the workforce in

the higher education sector leading to increasing power plays among employees to secure their positions (Ek et al., 2013). These behavioural changes among higher education staff may be driven by stringent budgeting, reduced resources and work intensifications in the sector (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014). Similar observations were also made by Omari and Paull (2013) in their research on workplace bullying in the legal profession. In this pursuit of securing their own grounds, many may engage in bullying as an effective means to fortify their interests (Lester, 2009, 2013) or reduce and/or eliminate competition.

Such a high pressure work environment may prove to be a perfect breeding ground for bullying to occur, as people may decide to use inappropriate tactics to protect their position (Skinner et al., 2015). The critical aspect observation here is that, when the workforce in these institutions is engaging in such bullying behaviours, it is arguably bound to have a significant negative influence on the quality of education services provided to the students, in a way detracting from the quality and purpose of higher education.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Swanson (2013), a theoretical framework introduces prevailing academic perspectives indicating the existence of a knowledge gap that a particular study wants to address. This study's main focus is on the nature, influencing factors and consequences of bullying in the Australian higher education setting; aspects discussed earlier in this chapter. This section describes the framework which provided a roadmap which guided the direction of this study; as designed based on the critical analysis of the literature in the field.

Despite more than three decades of research focussed on understanding workplace bullying (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011a; Harvey et al., 2007; Jacobson et al., 2014; Jennifer et al., 2003; Leymann, 1990, 1996), scholars (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015; Samnani, 2013b; Wheeler, Halbesleben, & Shanine, 2010) still postulate the impending need for explaining this behaviour with a comprehensive theory. While, as previously discussed, various studies (e.g. Cameron et al., 2005; Euben & Lee, 2006; Farley et al., 2015; Holton, 1998; Hurley et al., 2016; McCormack et al., 2014; Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016) have highlighted the widespread prevalence of workplace bullying; Omari and Paull (2016) contends that there remains a need for further studying this behaviour in different contexts and workplace settings. Ramsay et al. (2011) suggest that various factors in an organisation's environment tend to influence behaviours occurring in its workforce. Baillien et al. (2009) also contended that organisational factors need to be studied in order to fully comprehend the occurrence and continuity of bullying behaviours in an organisation.

2.5.1 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As already discussed, researchers (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015; Einarsen & Raknes, 2000; Ramsay et al., 2011) still to this day identify the need for a strong theoretical base to explain bullying behaviours in working environments. Hoel et al. (2002) theorised workplace bullying as a psychological hazard, with antecedents and consequences for both, individual victims as well their organisations (Neall & Tuckey, 2014). The relational model by Aquino and Lamertz (2004) emphasised the behavioural context, in which bullying occurs. As well as the mentioned scholars, Roscigno et al. (2009) highlighted how organisational hierarchies determine the definitional perspective of power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim. The qualitative study by

Shallcross et al. (2010) further demonstrated that power imbalance can result from informal authority as well as formal hierarchies.

As Branch et al. (2013) note, one of the most accepted and all-encompassing frameworks to explain bullying was proposed by Einarsen et al. (Einarsen et al., 2011b; Einarsen & Raknes, 2000). Their framework presents society, organisation and individual characteristics as processes that may either prevent or promote the occurrence of bullying behaviours. The all-inclusive nature of that framework made it well-suited to guide this study.

Understanding the nature, influencing factors and consequences of bullying in Australian academia requires an investigation of the nation's cultural context (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007). Australian culture has been characterised as an equality matching culture, where people are considered equal as individuals, irrespective of their positions (Gannon & Pillai, 2009). The cultural diversity in Australian workforce reflects its multicultural population (Paull & Omari, 2016). Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, and Rodriguez-Carballeira (2011) suggest that individual or organisational actions, which may be acceptable in one culture, may not be welcomed in another; creating potential for misunderstandings, conflicts and bullying.

CONTEXT TO ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Different academic viewpoints on exploring organisational culture (e.g. Armstrong, 1999; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; O'Reilly III et al., 1991; Schein, 1983) were discussed in the literature review. For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected the Competing Values Framework (hereafter referred to as CVF) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) for assessing organisational culture, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Different studies (e.g. Deshpande & Farley, 2004; Kwan & Walker, 2004; Ralston & Tong-Terpstra, 2006; Yu & Wu, 2009) which used CVF to study organisational cultures in various industries, have established its credibility across a wide range of work settings. The applicability of this framework to study organisational culture in higher education institutions, can be accredited to the corporatisation of these institutions. Australian higher education sector, which is the focus area of this study, has converted from being sector to impart learning and conduct quality research; into an industry, motivated by corporate principles of profitability (Favaloro, 2015). Chang (2015) highlights this transformation, indicating that corporatisation of universities in Australia has made them focus primarily on increasing profitability, where providing quality education is a secondary aim. Previous research (e.g. Sanderson, 2006) suggested that CVF may be applied to study the transforming organisational cultures in universities, as it provides the parameters of flexibility and focus to explore this cultural transformation. Yu and Wu (2009) contend that CVF may be used in qualitative research as a guiding force to explore the influencing factors that lead to changes in an organisational culture.

CONTEXT TO NATIONAL CULTURE

This study aimed to explore workplace bullying in higher education sector based in Australia, which made it imperative to deliberate upon the Australian cultural context, in which the behaviour unfolded. Australia has a multi-ethnic population, with migrants from around 200 countries globally (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). This gives the modern Australian workforce a culturally diverse composition of workers from different cultural backgrounds. These workers have their own cultural orientation, which influences their perception of other people's behaviours as well as

their own actions (LaVan & Martin, 2008). Harvey et al. (2007) suggested that this cultural diversity in a workforce may lead to different perceptions of the same behaviour, which individuals may or may not view as bullying. The Trompenaars typology of four cultures, as discussed earlier, enabled the researcher to assess the different cultural backgrounds of individuals who participated in this study and shared their bullying experiences. Previous studies (e.g. Dobni, 2008; Pyszka & Pilat, 2011) have suggested that Trompenaars typology may be useful in exploring why workers behave and perceive others' behaviour in a particular manner, based on their own cultural backgrounds. This aspect was particularly applicable to this study, which aimed to deliberate upon the cultural backgrounds of individuals, in relation to their bullying experiences.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

The influencing factors for this research are workplace bullying and culture (organisational as well as national), which have been explored in the context of Australian academia, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Zabrodska and Kveton (2013) have underlined how culture, both organisational as well as individual, plays a significant role in influencing workplace bullying in the higher education sector. Alemán (2014) similarly emphasises that the advent of NPM in academia may result in conditions which might trigger such behaviours. Such enabling conditions may include increased competition (Margison, 2015) and job insecurity in the sector (Hollis, 2015); which have been discussed further in this thesis. The occurrence and consequences of bullying are also the key focus areas for this study. Drawing upon the existing theoretical knowledge on workplace bullying and the existing literature reviewed in this chapter, Figure 8 depicts the framework of this study, along with the various variables concerned. This diagram is similar to the layers of an 'onion',

wherein workplace bullying is being studied in the context of national, sector-specific and organisational culture in the Australian higher education sector (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Framework for this study: Bullying in Australian higher education sector

2.5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Earlier in this chapter, the key aspects of Australian higher education sector were highlighted, for example bureaucratic organisational hierarchies, NPM (Favaloro, 2015), recent slowdown in growth, financial pressures and job insecurity (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016); all of which may lead to power struggles amongst the workforce (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015). Due to the dynamic nature of Australian higher education sector, it is open to influence from the wider social environment, which may in turn trigger bullying behaviours (McCarthy,

Rylance, Bennett, & Zimmermann, 2001). This study's literature review also identified that bullying behaviours in Australian academia are under researched (e.g. Skinner et al., 2015) and needed to be explored further.

This research aimed to comprehend the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector. Based on the gaps identified in the literature reviewed, the following are the research questions for this study which aimed at ultimately understanding, preventing, managing and ameliorating bullying behaviours in Australian academia:

1. How do employees in Australian academia experience bullying?
2. How are bullying behaviours driven by various forces in Australian academia?
3. What are the consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia?

This study aims to explore workplace bullying in higher education, as it is a significant issue in this sector (Skinner et al., 2015; Twale & De Luca, 2008) and one that is under researched (Hollis, 2015; Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013). As well, no comprehensive studies of workplace bullying involving different institutions have taken place in Australia to date; a gap in the knowledge- base which this study also aimed to fill. This study also contributes to improve the knowledge-base relating to workplace bullying, and as a consequence to prevention, management and amelioration of the behaviour, with wider societal implications.

This chapter discussed the different aspects of bullying, ranging from its definitions, causes and consequences, to the role of culture in the behaviour's occurrence. Special emphasis was made of the prevalence of bullying behaviours in academic institutions; the major focus of this research. A review of Australian higher education sector provided a summary of the key changes that this sector has undergone since its inception. An important feature that emerged was the growing corporatisation and slowly diminishing government funding to this sector, leaving the universities to largely fend for themselves through their own means. This new style of governance in higher education led to the discussion on new public management, which illustrated the significant changes that have taken place in this sector's governance around the world. The chapter ended with the study's theoretical framework and the research questions.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the research. It begins by introducing different research methods and the choice of the method for this study. The Australian context of this study is presented next, providing a background to the environment in which the research was conducted. This is followed by a discussion of the study's research design, paradigm, ethics and procedures. The chapter further explains the procedure followed for conducting the study, participants' recruitment and the use of semi-structured interviews for data collection. The chapter ends with outlining and justifying the application of thematic analysis for data interpretation.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Leedy and Ormrod (2012, p. 14) define research methodology as “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project”, which in this study is exploring workplace bullying in Australian academia. Cooper and Schindler (2014) contend that a sound methodology paves the way for systematic data collection and analysis, enabling the study to fulfil its research objectives (Allwood, 2012). This exploratory study adopted a qualitative approach towards studying bullying behaviours, as explained further in this chapter.

To date, there has been no comprehensive cross-institutional study on workplace bullying in Australian academia and very little is known about the work environment in which the behaviour occurs in this sector. Consequently, an exploratory study is proposed to gather and analyse diverse views on this behaviour within Australian higher education. While this study was by necessity exploratory in nature, it nevertheless aimed to produce research results relating to the nature, influencing

factors and consequences of bullying in Australian academia. This study captured the participants' views, as presented, and used their interpretations of how they were subjected to and experienced workplace bullying. The requirement that the study is undertaken in an ethical manner was met by taking steps to safeguard participants' interests and ensure their confidentiality. The issues of trustworthiness, credibility and ethics are addressed throughout the study and are discussed in detail, further in this chapter. The next section covers the research methods used in this study.

3.2 METHODS OF RESEARCH

Any study begins with a minimum of one research question to be explored within the specific area of interest (Williams, 2007). As outlined in chapter two, this study's three research questions focussed on exploring workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector. Leedy and Ormrod (2012) suggest that research is a process of collecting information, analysing data and searching for meaningful conclusion to the study's research questions. Fassinger and Morrow (2013) hold that the researchers' selection of method should be determined by their study's ultimate aim, the nature of the research question and the kind of data or information needed for conducting the study. This study follows the approach of collecting individual experiences of workplace bullying through semi-structured interviews, choice of which is explained later in this chapter. Williams (2007) further stated that the three most commonly used methods for conducting research (see Figure 9) are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Each of these methods are briefly reviewed below, studying their applicability for this study.

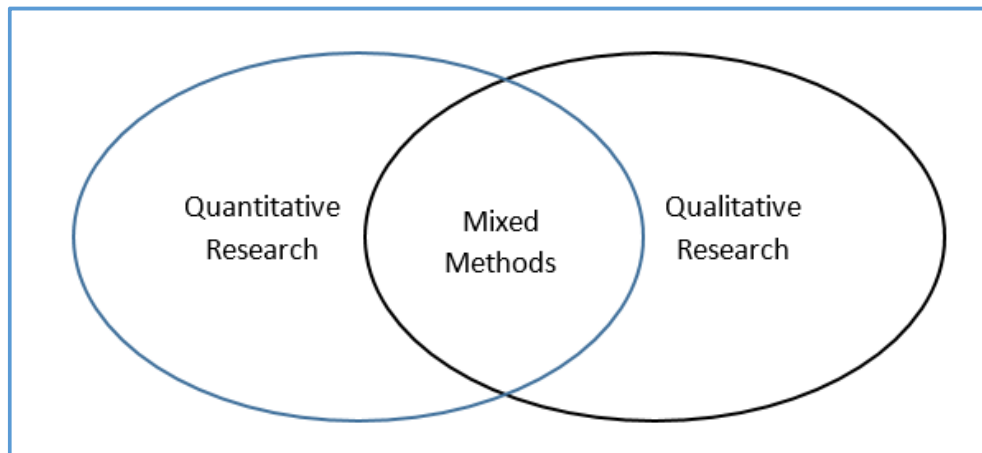


Figure 9: Different Methods of Research

Quantitative research can be defined as “a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world” (Burns & Grove, 2005, p. 23). Monfared and Derakhshan (2015) state that online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys, kiosks surveys, online polls and website interceptors are the common data collection tools used in quantitative research. The use of quantitative research for exploring descriptive issues, like workplace bullying, has, however, been contested by various researchers in the field (e.g. Fahie, 2014; Hurley, Hutchinson, Bradbury, & Brwone, 2016). O’Donnell and MacIntosh (2016) in their study on workplace bullying, contend that quantitative research only provides empirical evidence of the behaviour’s incidence, rather than in-depth exploration of the factors that may have led to its occurrence in the first place. Gillespie, Brown, Grubb, Shay, and Montoya (2015) further argue that quantitative research may not be suitable for studying how workplace bullying may unfold in particular work settings.

Mixed methods research is “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Mixed methods research may act as a bridge between qualitative and quantitative

research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013), although its acceptance across the research community is not well established (Molina Azorin & Cameron, 2010) and thus more investigation is required in its procedures (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012). Simons and Mawn (2011), in their research on workplace bullying, contend that mixed methods may not be suitable for studies which aim at providing a rich description of contextual behaviours. Since this study's focus was on exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in the specific context of Australian academia, a mixed methods approach did not appear to be most suitable for this study.

Qualitative research

Samnani, Boekhorst, and Harrison (2015) suggest that a qualitative approach can more effectively deliberate on the descriptive aspects of workplace bullying; the focus area of the current research. Qualitative research emerged as an alternate view of knowledge during the course of the 20th century (Katz, 2015) and developed from the wide dissatisfaction with the assumption that all phenomenon can be quantified as well as empirically verified (Ponterotto, 2005). As Cameron (1963, p. 13) observed, “not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted”. This quote encapsulates the essence of qualitative research, which helps in understanding subjects that cannot be quantified. While noting its wide scope of enquiry, Lewis (2015) contends that a variety of definitions exist to describe qualitative research. Monfared and Derakhshan (2015, p. 1111) refer to qualitative research as “collecting, analysing and interpreting data by observing what people do and say”. Merriam (2009, p. 13) defined qualitative research as “understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world”. While both these definitions emphasise the

purpose and focus of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 3) offer a self-explanatory definition, highlighting the process and context of the data gathered :

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world.”

The definitions stated above demonstrate that qualitative research may be best suited for interpreting behaviours in specific contexts, adding to the narrative of this study on workplace bullying. Qualitative research aligns with the philosophical paradigm of constructivism-interpretivism (Gaffney, DreMarco, Hofmeyer, Vessey, & Budin, 2012), which relates to the contention that “meaning is hidden and must be brought to the surface through deep reflection” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129). This aspect is discussed further in the chapter. Researchers applying qualitative methods possess an interpretive (Goldkuhl, 2012) and naturalistic approach to the world (Romani, Primecz, & Topcu, 2011), which means that “they study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). This view is also supported by Creswell (2014), who labels qualitative research to be a comprehensive method of understanding a phenomenon in its natural settings. Katz (2015) further contends that knowledge in qualitative research is developed through a deep level of involvement with the actual subject. The development of understanding in qualitative research, from which the meaning surfaces, is inevitably attached to individual viewpoints (O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014), and therefore, is interpretative

(Aguirre & Bolton, 2014; Rennie, Watson, & Monteiro, 2002); as it builds upon subjective interpretations of the research subject.

While Berger (2015), and Gaffney et al. (2012), highlight the association between the researcher and the data in qualitative research, Williams (2007) notes a contrast in quantitative research, wherein the researcher is firmly outside of the subject being studied. As researchers (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Kisely & Kendall, 2011; Kitto, Chesters, & Grbich, 2008) observed, the various sources of data collection for qualitative research include interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured), field notes, conversations, photographs, audio-video recordings and memos to self. Silverman (2011) states that data gathered in such research is usually audio, video, image or textual; and generally cannot be statistically analysed to generate knowledge about the studied phenomenon. For this reason, consistent with the views of Kang and Yun (2016), a qualitative approach seemed most appropriate for this exploratory and largely descriptive study on workplace bullying.

Qualitative studies generally involve “a small number of participants or research settings, selected or recruited because of their involvement with the topic under scrutiny, and focus on building an in-depth picture of the topic and the problem” (Shelton, Smith, & Mort, 2014, p. 71). A qualitative approach may therefore be most appropriate to explore how workplace bullying occurs in the context of Australian academia, the focus area of this study. Liu and Xindai (2015) observe that qualitative research is increasingly being applied to a variety of disciplines, like sociology, anthropology, psychology, health care, nursing, education, arts and humanities, illustrating its wide acceptance across different fields. Ritholz, Beverly, and Weinger

(2011) state that the essence of qualitative research is in understanding those phenomenon or settings, which are subjective in nature, cannot be measured empirically and require deep understanding (Lewis, 2015) rather than statistical analysis, for generating knowledge (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). Gillespie et al. (2015) contend that workplace bullying is one such subjective behaviour, in which qualitative research may be most suitable.

This study's focus was on exploring individual accounts of workplace bullying in Australian academia, essentially seeking to unearth how the behaviour unfolds in the sector. Various researchers (e.g. Gordon-Finlayson, Becker, Sullivan, & Wiggins, 2015; McDonough, 2001; Metcalfe, 2013; Rose et al., 2015) have indicated that stories are a powerful qualitative research tool. As noted by Steinbauer, Rhew, and Chen (2015), and Vough and Caza (2017), stories depict individuals' emotions and approach towards making sense about the world around them. Accounts of individual experiences of workplace bullying are vital for understanding the different aspects of this behaviour (McCormack, Djurkovic, & Casimir, 2014; O'Donnell & MacIntosh, 2016; Sobre-Denton, 2012); such accounts therefore form the structure of this exploratory study on bullying, where individual views will shape the study's findings. Recent studies (e.g. Fahie, 2014; Gaffney et al., 2012; Hurley et al., 2016; Kristina Mikkonen, Kyngäs, & Kääriäinen, 2015), similar to this research, also found that a qualitative approach is more suitable for exploratory studies on workplace bullying; which gather and analyse descriptive data on the behaviour, along with providing a strong basis for future qualitative studies.

3.3 CHOICE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As stated earlier, this study aimed at exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences of bullying behaviours in Australian academia. Researchers (e.g. Paull & Girardi, 2016; Samnani, 2013) hold that bullying behaviours involve a high degree of subjectivity and may be best understood through qualitative research. Qualitative research, as Cooper and Schindler (2014) suggest, is most suited for studies where the main objective is to understand why something happened. Brikci and Green (2007), and Lewis (2015), also recommend qualitative approach as being most applicable for understanding certain life aspects and behaviours that cannot be fully explored by quantifying, like workplace bullying. These are subjects and issues, which may not have the specific parameters to be measured in numbers (Kisely & Kendall, 2011); and yet, they are of great significance (Rallis, 2015) and can only be studied in a qualitative perspective (Fevre, Robinson, Jones, & Lewis, 2010). Hurley et al. (2016), underline workplace bullying as one such behaviour, where a qualitative inquiry may bring forth the interplay of various factors leading to the behaviour's occurrence, which is also one of this study's aims. Qualitative studies addressing the same questions may yield different results (Lewis, 2015); reflecting the researchers' viewpoints and study aims (Monfared & Derakhshan, 2015). While adopting a qualitative approach to workplace bullying, Gillespie et al. (2015) suggest that the behaviour may fully be understood through individual accounts, collected particularly through interviews. Such interviews may also be helpful in studying those behaviours, where different individuals tend to have different understandings of similar situations (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015) and to the questions related to it (Fox & Stallworth, 2010).

Workplace bullying is a descriptive issue influenced by different underlying factors (Sobre-Denton, 2012; Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015) that can be best explored through qualitative research (Gaffney et al., 2012; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006). While Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, and De Cuyper (2009), and Boeije (2010), recommend a qualitative approach to be focussed on exploration and detailed analysis; Hurley et al. (2016) contend that the such research should chiefly aim at understanding an expressive phenomenon, like workplace bullying. Strandmark and Hallberg (2007) had earlier suggested that workplace bullying can wholly be understood through analysing people's stories or experiences as it throws more light on the behaviour, its nature and influencing factors; aspects which this research also aimed to study. This research employed a qualitative approach to analyse and interpret the data collected from the participants, as it aimed to explore why and how bullying happens in Australian academia.

3.4 THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

This research aimed at investigating workplace bullying in the Australian context. It is therefore important to have an understanding of the country and the cultural context in which the behaviour unfolds, as it provides the demographic and the national background to this study. While studying workplace bullying in the Australian public sector, Bradbury and Hutchinson (2015) also underline the importance of discussing the national context in which a particular study is set. This heading also consists of some basic statistics about Australia and its society, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015), along with a brief introduction to Western Australia, where the study was based.

LOCATION

Australia is a nation consisting of the Australian mainland continent, Tasmania, and several smaller islands, with a total landmass of 7617930 square kilometres. Surrounded by the Indian and the Pacific oceans, it is the world's smallest continent and the sixth largest nation area wise, after Russia, Canada, China, the US, and Brazil. It has the distinction of being the only country having an entire continent for itself. While exploring the country's higher education sector, Margison (2015) observes that Australia's geographical proximity to Asia makes it an appealing study destination for many international students who wish to gain further education abroad. The map below (Figure 10) illustrates the topographical details of Australia.



Figure 10: Map of Australia, as reported in the World Fact Book (2014) by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency.

GOVERNMENT AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of State represented in Australia by the Governor General at the federal level and Governors at the state level. The governance in Australia is based on the Westminster model from the United Kingdom. The Crown

is represented in Australia by the Governor General, who in practice, acts and exercise powers on the advice of the head of Australian government, the Prime Minister and his/her council of ministers. Similar governance patterns are adopted at the state and territory levels, along with 560 local councils across the nations. Australia is a unique democracy with compulsory voting, which implies that all Australian citizens, over the age of 18, must vote in both federal and state elections (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015).

ECONOMY

Australia is classified as a developed country, with its economy being considered one of the most stable and strongest across the globe. The following information about Australia has been sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The annual Gross Domestic Product (hereafter referred to as GDP) of Australia for the year 2014, was US\$ 1.444 trillion, which is an indicator of its economic stronghold in the world economic sphere. Another intriguing characteristic of the Australian economy is the dominance of the service sector, which contributes to 67.4% of the nation's GDP, followed by industries (28.9%) and agriculture (3.7%). Such a large contribution of the service sector indicates that Australian economy is a people based economy, with a workforce of 12.3 million people, and yet a low inflation rate of just 3%. Research (e.g. Enright & Petty, 2016) has indicated that such a high proportion of contribution by services industries and the subsequent large work force, makes the Australian job market highly dynamic with much internal competition. Scholars (e.g. Shin & Jung, 2014; Treadway, Shaughnessy, Breland, Yang, & Reeves, 2013) posit that such competitive work environments may provide breeding grounds for bullying to occur. Supporting similar views, Skinner et al. (2015)

contend that increased competition amongst the workforce in the Australian higher education sector often leads to behaviours, which amount to bullying.

Australians also have a high per capita GDP of 67,100 Australian dollars (AUD). The major imports of Australia are recreational travels services, crude petroleum, passenger motor vehicles, refined petroleum, and freight transport services. Underlining the high value of education, Australia's exports include iron ore and concentrates, coal and natural gas, education, travel services and gold. As Harmon (2015) observes, the competitive third place of education in Australia's major exports emphasises the strategic importance of education sector in its economy, which is one of the leading, globally competitive, advanced market economies in the world.

POPULATION AND CULTURE

The multi-ethnic Australian population of 22,262,501 comprises of 92% white, 7% Asian and 1% of Aboriginal and other backgrounds. The population speak a variety of languages apart from English (78.5%), these include Chinese (2.5%), Italian (1.6%), Greek (1.3%), Arabic (1.2%), Vietnamese (1%), others and unspecified (13.9%). Conclusively, Australia has the world's 20th highest net migration rate of 5.83 migrants/1000 of the population, with migrants from around 200 countries globally (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015) referring to Australia as their adopted homeland. Consistent with the views of French, Strachan, and Burgess (2014), the above facts and figures indicate towards the multicultural build-up of the modern Australian society today. Various researchers (e.g. Jacobson, Hood, & Buren III, 2014; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007; Omari & Sharma, 2016) have linked cultural diversity in the workforce to the occurrence of workplace bullying.

With particular reference towards Australian culture, it is important to explore the cultural context of this study. Hofstede (2001) categorised the Australian culture as

highly individualistic and less hierarchical in nature, in line with American and British cultures (Hofstede, 2001). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) suggest that Australian culture is universalistic in nature, wherein, rules and regulations are consistently followed in all scenarios, with incidental exceptions of particularistic behaviours. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) Study, classified Australian culture as a part of the Anglo (English speaking) cluster of countries, characterised by low power distance and high humane orientation (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). Omari and Sharma (2016) describe Australian culture as being an egalitarian and equality based culture, where people expect fairness and equality from each other; while Paull and Omari (2016) describe Australian workplaces as being multicultural, indicating at the diversity in the workforce. The above deliberations, either implicitly or explicitly, portray Australian culture as an open, low power distance culture. This observation provides a preview of how the Australian people may view and comprehend different work related behaviours, including workplace bullying.

Australia is economically advanced and an ethnically diverse nation. As Bouma (2016) contends, it is inevitable that such a culture may implicitly be formed as well as influenced by the people of different national backgrounds which make up its population. This diverse group of people constitute the organisations' workforce and subsequently their cultural backgrounds come in play with the culture of the organisation in which they are working. Omari and Sharma (2016, p. 39) highlight the role culture in bullying occurrences, terming it as a "lens", through which individuals view particular behaviours as being bullying. Along with underlining the contributions made by a culturally diverse workforce in Australian universities, Hugo (2014)

highlights that the multicultural setup of these institutions may also have influenced the work culture in Australian academia; the focus area of this study.

INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This study is based in the state of Western Australia (hereafter referred to as WA), and an overview is provided to introduce the state. WA encompasses the entire western part of the Australian continent. Being Australia's largest state, it has a population of around 2.5 million people, with 38% of its populace being born overseas. People born in United Kingdom, New Zealand and South Africa, formed the top three largest groups of overseas born population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015). WA also has a well-established infrastructure of higher education. There are four public universities (University of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University, Curtin University of Technology and Murdoch University) and one not-for-profit, private university (University of Notre Dame) catering to the higher education needs of this state's population. As these five universities serve the entire state of WA, there may be intense competition for jobs in these institutions; which may provide enabling circumstances for bullying to occur.

The past exponential growth in WA's mining sector, locally referred to as the 'mining boom' (Brueckner, Durey, Mayes, & Pforr, 2013, p. 112), which has since dissipated, had previously given rise to a large number of jobs in the sector. Being rich in natural resources, mining is the largest industry in WA (Tonts, Martinus, & Plummer, 2013), with an 11% contribution to its Gross State Product in 2013 (Western Australia Economic Profile, 2014). These figures might seem encouraging, but the mining boom has witnessed a recent recession, with the number of jobs available reducing in recent times. In 2012-2013, the sector witnessed a 9% reduction, due to the largest annual

average fall in the prices of mining commodities in more than two (2) decades (Western Australia Economic Profile, 2014). Brown and Hoxby (2015) observe that economic downturn has a ripple effect on the higher education sector, wherein, due to increased competition in the job market, more students are now enrolling to study in universities to upgrade their skill set. Dow (2014) states that the real challenge for the higher education sector is to continue providing quality education to this increasing student base, despite the reduction in Commonwealth funding to support universities. As Bentley, Coates, Dobson, Goedegeburre, and Meek (2013) contend, such diminished support from the government may also result in universities exerting excessive pressure on its existing resources; a view also highlighted by the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (2016) in its annual report on the sector. This scenario, coupled with the recent changes in Australian higher education (elaborated earlier in chapter two) have created an environment of uncertainty in Australian academia, which may provide enabling conditions for bullying to occur.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Adams, Khan, and Raeside (2014, p. 64) define research design as “the blueprint for fulfilling objectives and answering questions”. Yin’s (2009) more specific definition stated that a research design articulates what data is to be gathered from which sources and how it is going to help meet the research objectives. The following figure (Figure 11) illustrates the research design for this study.

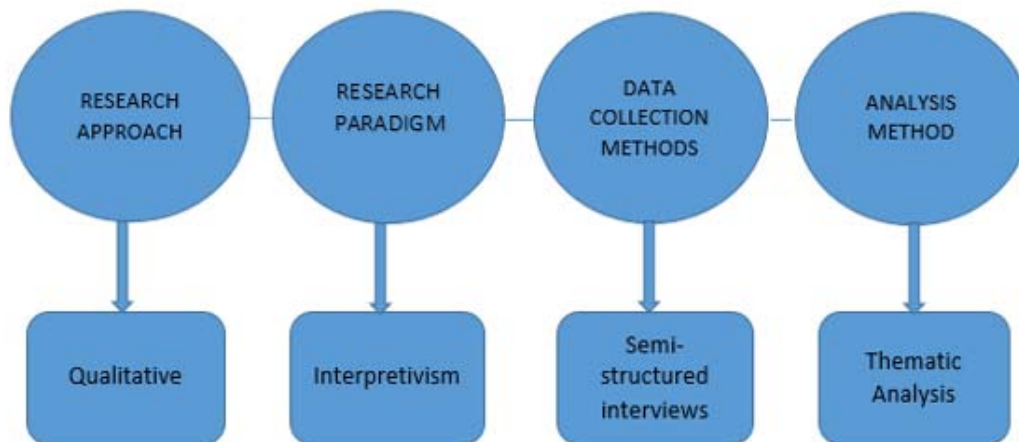


Figure 11: Research Design- based on Einarsen et al. (2011, p.220), Harrington et al. (2015, p.372), and Thirlwall (2015, p.147).

As shown in Figure 11 above, this exploratory study used a qualitative approach to understand bullying behaviours in Australian academia. As Rallis (2015) noted, certain behaviours may be interpreted differently by every individual, like workplace bullying (Kristina Mikkonen et al., 2015; Molina Azorin & Cameron, 2010). Various scholars (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010) also suggest that workplace bullying may hold different meanings for different people. Hutchinson and Jackson (2015) therefore hold that qualitative research methods are best suited to understand this subjective behaviour. This was one of the key reasons for choosing a qualitative approach for this study. As workplace bullying is a sensitive issue (Fahie, 2014), Harrington, Warren, and Rayner (2015) contend that it can be fully grasped by interpreting the descriptive details of the individual bullying experiences. Such interpretation also throws light on the various influencing factors which play a role in the occurrence of bullying and its consequences. The data collected for this study was thematically analysed to unearth different layers of workplace bullying in Australian academia.

3.6 INTERPRETIVIST RESEARCH PARADIGM

Paradigms form the philosophical background of research (Kaplan, 2015) conducted in the field of social sciences (Wahyuni, 2012). As noted by Munar and Jamal (2016), and Petty, Thomson, and Stew (2012), research paradigms are the key conventions and principles which determine how scholars perceive the world around them; along with moulding their research endeavours (Jonker & Pennink, 2010; Scotland, 2012). Hazlett, McAdam, and Gallagher (2005) opined that the choice of a suitable paradigmatic approach is an important aspect which guides any research. Further, Wolgemuth et al. (2015) contend that it provides a philosophical base to the study.

As Samnani (2013, 2016) and Zabrodska, Ellwood, Zaeemdar, and Mudrak (2016) observe, the majority of researchers have approached the subject of workplace bullying through a functionalist approach of enquiry. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 25), this approach is “firmly rooted in the sociology of regulation and approaches its subject matter from an objectivist point of view”. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (2011) contend that studies on workplace bullying using a functionalist approach primarily seek to measure if an individual has been bullied or not, without giving any importance to how the behaviour unfolded. This predominantly functionalist approach to bullying has resulted in an objective view on this behaviour (Zabrodska et al., 2016), which is restricted in terms of description and detail (Baillien et al., 2009; Tracy et al., 2006). The need for studying workplace bullying from a non-functionalist approach largely remains, which may provide a detailed description of how the behaviour occurs.

Clegg (2010) contended that alternate paradigmatic views, apart from functionalism, may be useful in understanding behaviours like bullying, more descriptively and may

add to the existing literature on the subject. Some scholars (e.g. Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006; Liefoghe & Davey, 2001; McCarthy, 2003; Samnani, 2013, 2016; Tracy et al., 2006) have also focussed more on understanding bullying behaviours from a non-functionalist approach.

Interpretivism is one such non-functionalist approach (Scotland, 2012), which allows for multiple viewpoints (Munar & Jamal, 2016) regarding the same social phenomenon (Wahyuni, 2012). Bailey, Ford, and Raelin (2009, p. 35) postulated that “interpretivist methods are better suited for eliciting and managing change”. Scholars subscribing to interpretivism contend that individuals contribute towards constructing social reality (Wahyuni, 2012), through their own interpretation of particular experiences (Kaplan, 2015). Since individuals have their own subjective views based on their experiences (Greeff, 2015), social reality keeps evolving with their successive, multiple viewpoints (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). In line with this view, Hutchinson and Jackson (2015, p. 14) identify workplace bullying as a “socially constructed reality” which keeps evolving with its different interpretations by various individuals, who experience the behaviour. Research (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Gaffney et al., 2012; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010) has established the element of subjectivity in workplace bullying, wherein individuals can interpret the same behaviour in different ways.

Einarsen et al. (2011) also postulate that a non-functionalist approach, like interpretivism, is particularly useful in understanding bullying behaviours, where functionalist investigations have not yielded much changes to curb the behaviour’s occurrence. The interpretivist paradigm approaches an issue with a subjective view (Samnani, 2013), which is different from the objective approach used in functionalist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Romani et al. (2011) and Goldkuhl (2012)

observe that the major focus in an interpretivist approach is to understand the subject matter from an individual's view and experience. Samnani (2016) contends that interpretivism approaches bullying in a more subjective manner, by allowing researchers to encourage participants to add descriptive details of their experiences.

This study adopted the interpretivist philosophical paradigm, as it aimed to give voice to the victims and witnesses of bullying behaviours (Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014), who told the researcher about their experience of workplace bullying in the higher education sector (Vickers, 2014). Based on how they experienced the bullying, it was these participants who then interpreted the behaviour for the researcher (Samnani, 2016). The major strength of this research was in the analysis of these individual stories. As Sparker (2005) observed, stories provide a strong base for qualitative research aimed at understanding different behaviours. Stories could, therefore, be a very powerful tool for studying workplace bullying (McCormack et al., 2014; Vickers, 2014), as it may unearth the behaviour's several subjective interpretations (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). In line with the interpretivist research paradigm (Perrier, Smith, & Latimer-Cheung, 2015), such individual accounts enable the researcher to explore the research topics in depth through well-constructed personal accounts (Blodgett & Schinke, 2015); which may result in a detailed understanding of the subject being studied. As mentioned earlier, a functionalist approach may not deliver such thorough descriptions, which may be essential to understand a subjective behaviour like workplace bullying. As noted by various scholars (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011; Samnani, 2013), the non-functionalist approach of interpretivism may be adopted for research aiming to explore a descriptive subject like workplace bullying; the focus area of this study.

3.7 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher plays a key role in ensuring the ethical conduct of qualitative research (Berger, 2015), especially in studies based on data collected through interviews (Enosh & Ben-Ari, 2016). This qualitative study explored workplace bullying in Australian academia through semi-structured interviews with professional and academic staff in higher education institutions. The academics mainly focus on teaching and research at the universities, while the professional staff provide various allied services to both, the academic staff and the students at these institutions (Hollis, 2015). The researcher in such an exploratory study (Hoover & Morrow, 2015) is inevitably a part of both “the process and product of the research enterprise” (Horsburgh, 2003, p. 309). This phenomenon is commonly referred to by scholars as reflexivity (Enosh & Ben-Ari, 2016). Reflexivity in qualitative research is influenced by the study’s paradigmatic approach (Clancy, 2013). Following the interpretivist research paradigm to explore bullying behaviours (Einarsen et al., 2011), the researcher in this study was directly involved, not only in the collection of data through interviews (Yang, 2015), but also its (re)interpretation to answer the research questions (Lewis, 2015).

Workplace bullying is a sensitive issue (Hurley et al., 2016), and as Fahie (2014) contends, cannot be explored without the researcher unavoidably adding his/her own perspective to the research findings. Berger (2015), however, recommends that such influence should be minimal. Subsequent study of relevant literature (Ahmed Dunya, Lewando, & Blackburn, 2011; D’Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Gerstl-Pepin & Partrizion, 2009; Hoover & Morrow, 2015; Suddaby, Viale, & Gendron, 2016) made the researcher aware of the impact reflexivity has on the findings of qualitative research. The challenge for the researcher in such qualitative studies is to probe deeply

without leading the interviewees in any particular direction. In line with the notion of reflexivity (Gabriel, 2015), the researcher in this study made all efforts to conduct the interviews in a non-biased manner, where participants were not guided to respond in any particular way; therefore ensuring the credibility of the individual accounts of bullying (Fahie, 2014). As noted by various scholars (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012), workplace bullying is a multi-layered behaviour. While the researcher did probe participants to unearth different layers of bullying behaviour, he did not prompt the participants to take any particular stand; therefore providing interviewees complete freedom in their responses. Such steps ensured that bullying experiences were interpreted freely by the participants, in line with the interpretivist approach (Samnani, 2016), without participants' responses being influenced by the researcher. While underlining the significance of reflexivity, Berger (2015) refers it as the researcher's ability to reflect on the research experience. Recent studies on workplace bullying (e.g. Johnson, Boutain, Tsai, Beaton, & Castro, 2015; Vickers, 2015) have also established the need for a researcher to be aware of the effect reflexivity can have on research findings and therefore ensure provisions to manage its influence effectively.

3.8 RESEARCH PROCEDURES FOR THIS STUDY

Interviews are one of the most commonly used tools for collecting data in qualitative research (Brinkmann, 2016). This study gathered individual experiences of workplace bullying through interviews, as the primary research instrument. Scholars (e.g. Heaton, 2004; Kitto et al., 2008; Kuper, Lingard, & Levinson, 2008; Mikkonen, Elo, Kuivila, Tuomikoski, & Kääriäinen, 2016; O'Brien et al., 2014) observed that interviews are one of the major data collection instruments for gathering data for qualitative exploratory studies. Gray (2009), and Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, and

Crann (2015), found that interviews are most applicable for collecting data related to a sensitive subject, like workplace bullying (Fahie, 2014; Hurley et al., 2016; Johnson, 2015). Harrington et al. (2015) further note the interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to interact with the interviewee to gather detailed responses. In line with the existing literature (e.g. Dzurec, 2016; Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse, & van Dam, 2016; Nielsen & Knardahl, 2015; Shabazz, Parry-Smith, Oates, Henderson, & Mountfield, 2016; Weiss, Cappadocia, Tint, & Pepler, 2015), this thesis uses the term victim to refer to individuals who have experienced behaviours they regarded as workplace bullying. Use of this terminology is not intended to cast these individuals as life victims but rather as survivors of workplace bullying, as supported by Ciby and Raya (2014). The recruitment process of study participants is outlined later in this chapter.

In order to ensure confidentiality, interviews were conducted in a location away from the participant's workplace, like cafes, libraries or common meeting rooms at the universities. Confidentiality provided the participants with a level of comfort and security, enabling them to give open and extended accounts of their bullying experiences. All the interviews were electronically recorded with prior approval of the participants, through the signed study's consent forms (Appendix #2) and were professionally transcribed verbatim. All data transcripts were stored under lock and key at the researcher's workstation at the university. The participants' knowledge that any research data they provide will be securely stored and de-identified, increased the likelihood that the data provided would be accurate and in-depth.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ensuring the ethical conduct of a research project is of paramount importance (Berger, 2015), as it confirms that the study does not have any negative implications for either the participants, researchers or society at large (O'Brien et al., 2014). The researcher was aware that victims of workplace bullying already suffered hardships at work (Agervold, 2007; Carter et al., 2013b; Franklin & Chadwick, 2013) while experiencing the behaviour's physical (Salin, 2015) and psychological consequences (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015). To safeguard victims' well-being, Johnson (2015) urges researchers to ensure the ethical conduct of their study as well as be cautious of not further distressing the victims. Workplace bullying is such a delicate issue (Fahie, 2014), that its victims may be reluctant to openly discuss their experience of being bullied (Hansen et al., 2016). The researcher was mindful that bullying is a sensitive issue open to different interpretations by different people (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Berlingieri, 2015; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012; Omari, 2007) and that the ethical considerations needed to be sensitively and rigorously addressed (Johnson, 2015), as detailed further in this chapter.

To ensure the ethical conduct of this study involving interviews on workplace bullying with individuals, the necessary approval from the University's Human Research Ethics Committee was sought and acquired. Data for this study was collected via confidential interviews and aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of individual experiences of workplace bullying in Australian academia. Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were informed that they may exit the interview at any stage that they may wish to. To protect the interests of participants, they were also assured that their contribution would remain fully confidential and that their identities, or that of their universities would not be revealed under any circumstances. In light of

the subject's sensitivity, the researcher was aware of the possible discomfort participants may have, while recalling their bullying experience. Accordingly, participants were allowed to take their time in responding to questions, without feeling any pressure to do so; thus ensuring their ease throughout the interview. The interview questions started by asking the participant, if they were bullied and asked them to describe their experiences in detail. This approach was followed by questioning to unearth various influencing factors, including culture, and the role which they may have played in bringing about the bullying behaviour. The data transcription and analysis was carried out once the data collection had been completed.

3.10 STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Success of any research largely depends upon a careful selection of the study participants. This ensures that the participants, on whose inputs the research is being built upon, are carefully recruited and possess the preferred characteristics. Sydor (2013), and Ellard-Gray et al. (2015), suggest that the delicate nature of the research subject, like bullying, makes it hard to reach the potential participants. Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, and Alberts (2007), and Fahie (2014) state that individuals are generally reluctant to talk about bullying, due to the effect the experience has had on them. This aspect makes the recruitment for studies on bullying, especially those which involve interviews, a difficult task; as individuals are often reluctant to share their bullying experiences. Victims of bullying also hesitate to discuss their experience (Fahie, 2014) due to the fear of having their identities revealed or feeling distressed.

3.10.1 SNOWBALL SAMPLING FOR PARTICIPANTS' RECRUITMENT

A total of forty one individuals were interviewed for this study, of whom ten were academic staff and thirty one were professional staff. Amongst the academic staff

participants, three were male and seven were female; while for the professional staff participants, six were male and twenty-five were female. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling; which Cooper and Schindler (2014, p. 204) define as a method whereby “participants refer researchers to others who have the characteristics, experiences, or attitudes similar to or different from their own”. Sadler, Lee, Lim, and Fullerton (2010, p. 371) further described snowball sampling as an “outreach strategy” to locate individuals, also known as the “seeds”, who are suitable for the study, and then utilise this individual’s social contacts to recruit other similar participants.

Liamputtong (2007) postulated that victims of behaviours like bullying may be vulnerable and may not openly want to admit that they had been bullied. Ellard-Gray et al. (2015) contend that due to this sensitive nature of bullying behaviour, potential participants may share their experiences with a researcher who has been referred to them by an acquaintance or colleague, rather than a complete stranger. Given the sensitivity of the research topic, snowball sampling allowed the researcher to gain participants’ confidence, as they were drawn into the study through their own social circle (Waters, 2015). These core advantages of overcoming the trust barrier and easy accessibility (Sadler et al., 2010), arguably makes snowball sampling the most suitable method for participants’ recruitment for this study. Recent studies of bullying (e.g. Sezer, Yilmaz, & Yilmaz, 2015; Weiss et al., 2015) have also utilised snowball sampling for their participants’ recruitment, further establishing its utility.

3.10.2 RECRUITMENT OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This study aimed to gather data on bullying experiences from both the academic and professional staff in the higher education institutions in Western Australia. This categorisation of workforce in the academia was based on the nature of the work

individuals undertook in the universities (Favaloro, 2015); as discussed earlier in this chapter. This categorisation of staff allowed the researcher to gather views on workplace bullying in academia from two distinct perspectives of academic and professional workers.

The respondents for this study were recruited from the four public universities in Perth, Western Australia. This study's first participant was recruited through word of mouth. In line with snowball sampling, the first participant who was recruited, then through his/her social and/or professional circle encouraged participation of further participants. Individuals, who fulfilled the following criteria, participated in this study on workplace bullying in Australian academia:

- (a) who had suffered workplace bullying in their present or previous workplaces in the higher education sector.
- (b) who had been a witness to such behaviour in their present or previous workplaces in higher education sector.

3.11 DATA COLLECTION VIA SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviews are one of the prime data collection tools in qualitative research (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; O'Brien et al., 2014). Heaton (2004), and Kisely and Kendall (2011) highlight interviews to be the foundation of qualitative research, which builds on people's experiences (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). Kvale (2007) described interviews as means, through which views on a particular subject are exchanged between the researcher and the participants; for the purpose of gaining a detailed understanding on behaviours, like workplace bullying (Harrington et al., 2015).

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data for this study, as it was most suitable for collecting descriptive data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014) on an issue like workplace bullying (McCormack et al., 2014), which is open to different interpretations by different individuals (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereira, 2002; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010). Recent studies on workplace bullying (e.g. Carter et al., 2013b; Harrington et al., 2015; Johnson, 2015; McCormack, Djurkovic, & Casimir, 2013; McCormack et al., 2014; Rooyen & McCormack, 2013) have also used semi-structured interviews for data collection, establishing its applicability in studying these behaviours. Producing a rich description of workplace bullying in Australian academia was essential to achieving this study's aims of gaining new insights into the nature of the behaviour, its influencing factors and consequences.

Corbetta (2003, p. 270) remarked on the process followed in a semi-structured interview, as below:

“The order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions are left to the interviewer's discretion. Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as he thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers best, to give explanation and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear, to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary, and to establish his own style of conversation.”

Research (e.g. Berge, Loth, Hanson, Croll-Lampert, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2012; Chase, 2011; Fahie, 2014) supports semi-structured interviews as being beneficial in exploring delicate issues, which have an element of subjectivity, and otherwise would

have been unreachable. Other scholars (e.g. David & Sutton, 2004; Harrington et al., 2015; McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Riley, Sims-Schouten, & Wiilig, 2007; van Tonder & Soontiens, 2013; Willig, 2008) also support the use of semi-structured interviews, as one of the most conventional data collection tools used in qualitative research. Another unique feature of semi-structured interviews is that the data collected through it, is based on individual's real-world experiences (Koenig, Back, & Crawley, 2003; Wahyuni, 2012), making the research outcomes more realistic (Harrington et al., 2015). Individual interviews were opted for in this study, as they gave the researcher an opportunity to capture people's experiences of bullying in depth (Kwan, Tuckey, & Dollard, 2016).

A major benefit of using semi-structured interviews for this study was that they provided the researcher with greater freedom in conducting the interview, as compared to other forms (Kajornboon, 2004; Potter & Hepburn, 2005, 2007). This aspect was particularly useful as workplace bullying experiences could be multi-layered (Rooyen & McCormack, 2013), which needed to be explored at different levels (Harrington et al., 2015) in this study through semi-structured interviews. Conducting interviews in a semi-structured format also provided the researcher with a chance for probing the participants (Pathak & Charatdao, 2012), helping delve into deeper relevant territories during the course of the interview which were not initially thought of. Probing also enabled the researcher to encourage the participants to provide additional descriptive information (Hoyle, Haaris, & Judd, 2002; Kallio et al., 2016), which may be very essential to gather while studying a delicate issue (Fahie, 2014) like workplace bullying (Hurley et al., 2016). Accordingly, the approach for conducting interviews in this study was successively improvised if needed (Wilson, 2016) based on the outcomes and understanding of preceding interviews (David & Sutton, 2004).

Another reason for choosing semi-structured interviews was that they are more effective in studying issues involving personal complexities (Francioli et al., 2015; Leon-Perez, Medina, Arenas, & Munduate, 2015; O'Leary, 2004) such as workplace bullying (Carter et al., 2013b). Scholars (e.g. Fahie, 2014; Hurley et al., 2016; Zapf & Gross, 2001) contend that, as bullying is a sensitive issue, individuals may get carried away while speaking about it in an interview, detracting from the main interview questions. This aspect added the risk of the interview going off the track in this study. Anticipating this, the researcher opted for semi-structured interviews, as its pre-determined questions deterred the participants from deviating from the focus areas being researched (Neuman, 2006).

As Paine (2015) observes, semi-structured interviews facilitate data collection under uniform headings in a pre-determined format. This feature enabled a comparison to be made among the different responses under the same heading, across the various interviews, once the data collection concluded (Kallio et al., 2016). This format also provided the researcher with an opportunity to explore the subject in greater depth, during both, the course of the interview and its subsequent transcription.

3.11.1 INTERVIEW PROCESS

At the start of interviews, the participants were provided with an information letter (Appendix #1) describing the nature and purpose of this study. They were also asked to sign a consent form (Appendix #2), stating their approval to participate in the study. The interviews were planned to last 45 minutes, although participants were allowed to go over if necessary. On average, the interviews lasted approximately one hour. The longest one took 92 minutes, while the shortest one lasted only 38 minutes. The semi-structured interviews conducted consisted of eight questions (Appendix #3). These

questions were designed by the researcher, drawing upon the available literature (e.g. Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Lester, 2013; Skinner et al., 2015), to cover the various aspects of bullying behaviours in Australian academia. These interview questions, discussed next, sought to unearth the nature, influencing factors and consequences of bullying in Australian universities, which has largely been unexplored.

All participants, whether academic or professional staff, were probed on the role of both, national and organisational culture in relation to workplace bullying. They were then asked to share the consequences they suffered as a result of being bullied at work, and whether they undertook any formal channel to redress the situation. They were also asked to discuss the role that the organisation played in either tolerating or preventing the bullying behaviour from continuing. The interview concluded with asking participants for any further details that they wanted to share with the researcher about their bullying experience. To ensure the participants' well-being and to prevent them from being distressed after discussing their bullying experience, they were provided with a list of free counselling services they could contact (Appendix #4), in case they experienced any stress after the interview. This step was initiated keeping in mind the ethical concerns for this study, as discussed earlier.

3.12 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Moira, Dieter, Winefield, and Aspa (2012), and Holm, Torkelson, and Bäckström (2016) suggest descriptive methods like thematic analysis, to be most applicable to interpret qualitative data to explore bullying behaviours; a view also held by other researchers (e.g. Harrington et al., 2015; Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011). Recent studies (e.g. Harrington, Rayner, & Warren, 2012; Hurley et al., 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; Patterson, 2016; Thirlwall, 2015; Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015) have

also used thematic analysis to explore workplace bullying, indicating its wide acceptance among the research community. Smith and Dunworth (2005, p. 603) highlighted the applicability of such analysis for studies which are concerned with “exploring, understanding and describing the personal and social experiences of participants and trying to capture the meanings that particular phenomena hold for them”. As noted earlier, the thematic analysis for this study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm. In line with this philosophical paradigm, the study participants offered their interpretation of experiences of workplace bullying, which was in turn interpreted by the researcher (Samnani, 2016), in light of the relevant available literature. Scholars (e.g. Babbie, 2013; Ryan & Bernard, 2000) postulated that thematic analysis mainly aims at explaining a phenomenon, rather than necessarily proposing a new theory to explain the study findings, which makes it unique from other qualitative research methods.

Scholars (e.g. Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013) observe that thematic analysis is best suited to interpret data collected through interviews, asking participants about their experiences of a particular event or behaviour. The main objective of thematic analysis is to study the data collected through individuals’ understandings about a phenomenon or an event (Harrington et al., 2015), that cannot be analysed empirically (Sparker, 2005), like workplace bullying (Fahie, 2014). Research (e.g. Carter et al., 2013a; Green & Thorogood, 2004) also highlighted that thematic analysis is particularly useful in conducting an exploratory study in an area like workplace bullying, where not much is known; and the body of knowledge is still developing (Samnani, 2013).

Thematic analysis, as an approach of qualitative research, was initiated by the seminal work in the field of sociology by Merton (1975). Thereafter, it was continuously

modified and successfully applied by numerous researchers (Aronson, 1995; Attride-Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012; Joffe, 2011; Joffe & Yardley, 2004; Tuckett, 2005). In spite of its extensive use, Clarke and Braun (2013) observed that thematic analysis has only recently started being recognised as an established method for qualitative research. Clarke and Braun (2013, p. 121) further credit this recent acceptance of thematic analysis to the fact that it can be used as a “basic method” to answer a wide range of research questions involving people’s experiences, which otherwise could not be analysed by other qualitative research methods. The major strength of thematic analysis is the flexibility in its approach (Holm et al., 2016), which provides freedom to the researcher to fully describe the phenomenon, without the theoretical boundaries present in other qualitative research methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) defined thematic analysis as “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. They further described the various phases of such analysis, elaborated in the Table 3 below:

Table 3: Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating the data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking to see the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis, selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the analysis of the research questions and the literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

As the table above indicates, thematic analysis involves the following steps: transcribing interviews, generating codes from the data, looking for themes within codes, revising the themes, describing and giving names to identified themes, and finally writing a report analysing the themes. The major focus of thematic analysis is on looking for recurring themes in the data collected, which may help in further explaining the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). While maintaining complete confidentiality, the semi-structured interviews conducted for this study were professionally transcribed verbatim. The interview transcripts were then coded and

analysed by hand (Appendix #5) using the phased approach outlined in Table 3 to generate the themes on which this study's findings are based.

The researcher was also mindful of thematically analysing the data to the point of saturation. Data is said to be saturated when a study has gathered enough data to answer the research question(s) (Fusch & Ness, 2015); and that such data has been coded to the point where no further new themes emerge (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Data collected for this study was coded and analysed using thematic analysis to the point of saturation, where enough themes were generated to replicate the whole study and no new themes were emerging. The analysis drew upon the established terms discussed in the literature review chapter and highlighted any differences in these terms, along with suggesting alternatives where necessary.

3.12.1 PARALLEL DATA ANALYSIS FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

As more and more data was transcribed and analysed, certain common themes emerged from the data, providing sector specific views on bullying experiences in Australian academia. Data collected from the academic and professional staff was, however, analysed separately to see the commonalities and differences in the bullying experiences of these two workgroups. During the course of data analysis, some themes did appear to be similar for both the work streams, but certain different themes also emerged for each group. The findings related to the academics and professional staff are presented in the next two chapters (chapter 4 and 5) and their commonalities and differences are discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis.

3.13 RIGOUR

Although much work on rigour comes from quantitative studies, rigour is equally a crucial concern for qualitative researchers. The idea of rigour in qualitative research was first put forward by Guba (1981), with the main aim of establishing the trustworthiness of the research outputs. Over the period of past four decades, various academics (e.g. Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1985, 1989; Krefling, 1991; O'Neill, 1995; Rallis, 2015; Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012; Tuckett, 2005) have used different strategies to ensure rigour in their qualitative studies, demonstrating its importance in ensuring the credibility of qualitative findings (Morse, 2015). El Hussein, Jakubec, and Osuji (2015) highlight that rigour not only warrants the believability of a study's findings, but also ensures that data is analysed in a systematic manner.

Building upon the terminology used by Guba (1981) and Guba and Lincoln (1989), Noble and Joanna (2015) outlines validity, reliability and generalisability as the major criteria for ensuring rigour in qualitative research; as illustrated in the figure below (Figure 12), and discussed thereafter. Although these parameters were initially used in quantitative studies based in positivism, recent research (e.g. Leung, 2015) shows that these parameters are equally relevant in the context of rigour in qualitative studies (Noble & Joanna, 2015) based on Interpretivism (Pandey & Chawla, 2016).

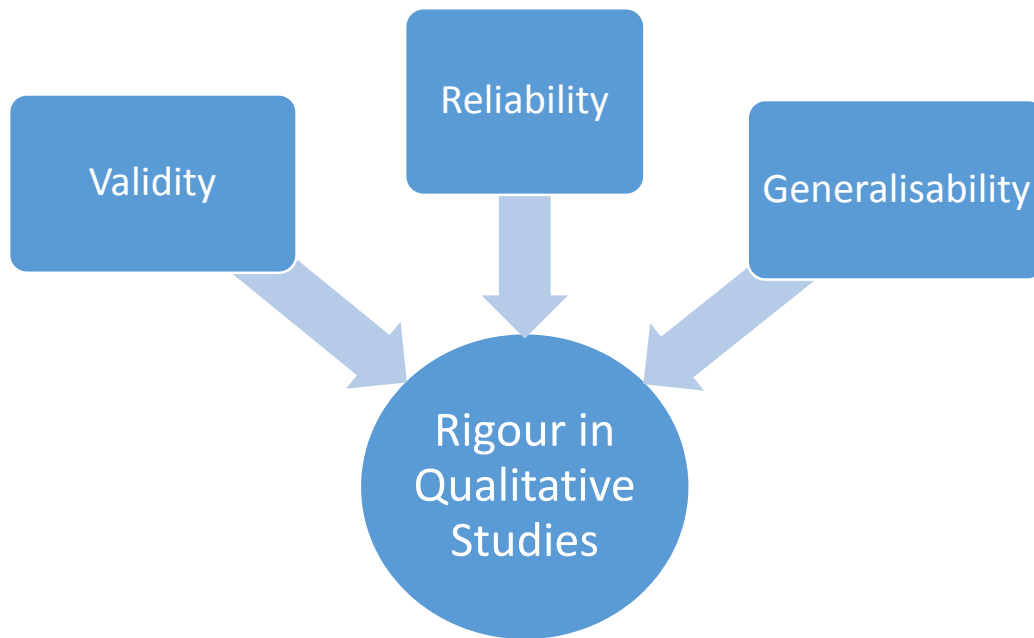


Figure 12: Rigour in qualitative studies- based on Noble and Joanna (2015, p. 35)

Validity can be defined as the “the degree to which inferences made in a study are accurate and well-founded” (Polit & Beck, 2012, p. 745). In order to ensure its validity, this study needed to use well established research procedures, capable of delivering trustworthy findings, which presents participants’ views with precision and detail (Noble & Joanna, 2015). For instance, this qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to collect data on the experiences of workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gather rich and descriptive data (Kallio et al., 2016) about workplace bullying (Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015), laying the foundations for this study’s findings. The applicability of semi-structured interviews in exploring workplace bullying has also been established by other researchers in the field (e.g. Carter et al., 2013b; Harrington et al., 2015; Johnson, 2015; McCormack et al., 2013, 2014; Rooyen & McCormack, 2013), further validating its choice for this study.

Reliability - Noble and Joanna (2015) refer to reliability as the consistency of the analytical procedures used in a qualitative study; aligning with the views of Morse (2015) and Rallis (2015). To ascertain the reliability of this exploratory study based on semi-structured interviews, Morse (2015) recommends the use of an appropriate coding and analysis method for studying the data collected. This study used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to study the interview data and derive emergent themes, which helped shape this study's findings. The reliability of thematic analysis is well established (Elo et al., 2014; Kristina Mikkonen et al., 2015; Mojtaba Vaismoradi, Hannele Turunen, & Terese Bondas, 2013) and it has been used by other researchers exploring workplace bullying (e.g. Harrington et al., 2012; Hurley et al., 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; Patterson, 2016; Thirlwall, 2015; Tye-Williams & Krone, 2015), further reiterating its consistency (Morse, 2015).

Generalisability can be defined as “the transferability of the findings to other settings and applicability in other contexts” (Noble & Joanna, 2015, p. 35). Although this study explored workplace bullying in the context of Australian higher education sector, its findings reflect the established views of other scholars reviewing the behaviour in different work contexts, which include academia outside of Australia (e.g. Hollis, 2015; Metzger, Petit, & Seiber, 2015; Schafferer & Szanajda, 2013), and other diverse fields like nursing (e.g. Franklin & Chadwick, 2013; Wilkins, 2014), policing (McKay, 2014) and public sector (e.g. Hurley et al., 2016; Venetoklis & Kettunen, 2016); indicating this study's findings to have implications for both, theory and practice in wider contexts. This chapter also outlines this study's research design and research methods in sufficient detail, to enable future researchers to apply them to explore this subject further.

3.14 POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Given the sensitive nature of this exploratory study, the collection, interpretation and analysis of the data was not simple enough to be stated in absolute terms. As Perakyla and Ruusuvuori (2011) observe, scholars examining multi-layered subjects, like workplace bullying (Rooyen & McCormack, 2013), often study the topic in its regular surroundings. O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, and Cook (2014), however, contend that such attempts to interpret or provide a meaning to the phenomena is often guided by the connotations which individuals attribute to the subject. Based on their own perspective, individuals interpret events differently through which they make sense out of those events; a view also supported by Currie and Brown (2003), Shin, Yuan, and Zhou (2016) and Strike and Rerup (2016). Weick et al. (2005, p. 409) termed this process as “sense making”; through which experiences are turned into explicit words (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2014) from which meanings are derived about the subject (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). These different interpretations can be collaborated to develop a common understanding about a subject, based on diverse individual views (Patriotta, 2015). Zabrodzka et al. (2016), and Paull and Girardi (2016) contends that this concept of sense making can play a key role in any exploratory study on workplace bullying. But sense making may also be a limiting factor, as both the researcher and the participants necessarily have their own pre-conceived notions of workplace bullying which may influence their respective interpretations of particular behaviours. Chapter 6 in the thesis provides more details on this study’s limitations.

3.15 PERSONAL JOURNEY OF THE RESEARCHER

Embarking on this research journey was one of the key decisions that I have ever made in my life. Having always had the zest to study and finding new knowledge, studying

for a PhD had always been my ambition. Pursuing a doctorate is known to be a journey and indeed it has been for me. Having worked in the United Kingdom and India for some years, coming back to university was itself a reinventing step. Workplace bullying is a subject close to my heart, as I have seen the negative behaviours unfold first hand in a workplace. Being fortunate enough to have expert supervisors, who are authorities in the field was a major step forward. They have guided me at every stage of my research and helped me shape this study. By the close of this study, reflection on this research journey made me realise how researchers evolve over time. During the course of this journey, I not only learnt how to critically study the available literature, but also to synthesise existing knowledge to build new knowledge. This study has been a learning experience and life-changing event, in terms of my academic advancement, development as a scholar, and personal growth.

Reviewing the vast majority of literature on workplace bullying made me realise that the behaviour has generally been studied from a quantitative perspective. However, having seen the behaviours occur firsthand, I believe that bullying is a complex and subjective behaviour which can be well understood by studying and interpreting people's experiences; this led me towards adopting a qualitative approach for this study. While acknowledging the contributions made by quantitative researchers to the body of knowledge, I am of the view that a qualitative study may provide insights on how the behaviour unfolds in a particular work setting; such as the Australian higher education sector. Devising and mastering a methodology that would enable a rich description and rigorous analysis of workplace bullying in the higher education sector was one of the most challenging and valuable aspects of my research journey.

3.16 SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter outlined the methodology used for this exploratory study and the rationale underpinning this choice. Adopting a qualitative approach enabled the gathering of detailed data on workplace bullying from the academic and professional staff interviewed for this study. By drawing on participants from two distinct work streams from four different Western Australian public universities, this study explored a broader picture of workplace bullying in the sector. In line with this study's ethical considerations, an appropriate set of measures, detailed earlier in this chapter, were used to protect participants' interests and ensure their well-being during data collection and analysis. This study's findings, reported in the next chapter, offer deeper insights on the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia.

This study's focus was on exploring individual accounts of workplace bullying in Australian academia, essentially seeking to identify how the behaviour unfolds in the sector. This study therefore sought a qualitative methodology that balanced demand for trustworthiness and ethical behaviour, as detailed earlier in the chapter. The selection of qualitative method, an interpretivist research paradigm and semi-structured interviews for data collection ensured that rich, descriptive data could be collected and analysed thematically to produce reliable and trustworthy findings. Being an exploratory study, this study's findings aimed at highlighting different aspects of workplace bullying for academic and professional staff in Australian academia; a sector where there has been limited prior research on this behaviour. The next two chapters discuss this study's findings for academic as well as professional staff. This will shed light on the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in the sector. This study's framework produced an effective and appropriate structure for its findings, based on the three research questions, as outlined earlier in chapter two.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS - ACADEMIC STAFF

This chapter reports the findings from the academic staff and their experience of workplace bullying in Australian academia. The chapter presents the findings on this study's three research questions, exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in the sector. Analysis of data and resultant findings have been reported in line with this study's theoretical framework. The findings have been supported by relevant extracts from the data collected for this study.

This chapter reports the findings on workplace bullying from academic staff interviewed for this study. The chapter also presents the specific themes which emerged from this study's data analysis; explained earlier in the methodology chapter. The researcher gathered data from ten academic staff, from four public universities in Western Australia through semi-structured interviews. As illustrated in Figure 13 below, seven of the ten participants were female, three were male. In this chapter, the term participant has been used to refer only to academics interviewed for this study.

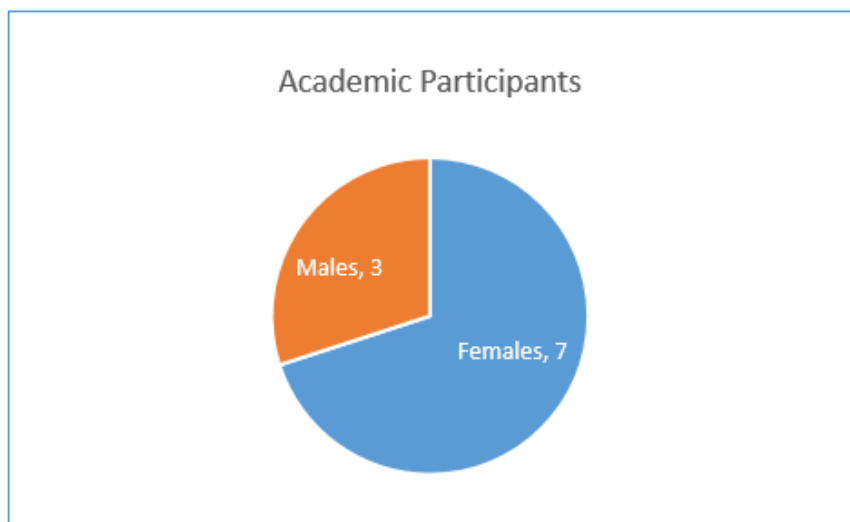


Figure 93: Academic participants in this study

This chapter outlines the findings, relating to each of the following three research questions:

- How do employees in Australian academia experience bullying?
- How are the bullying behaviours driven by various forces in Australian academia?
- What are the consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia?

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION #1: THE NATURE OF BULLYING

The first research question focussed on exploring the nature of bullying and the various forms it takes in the Australian higher education sector. The analysis of data presented certain themes regarding this aspect. This study's theoretical framework (see Figure 8 in Chapter 2) identified the need for defining the nature of workplace bullying, along with the actions that constitute the behaviour. Figure 14 summarises the findings for this research question, each element will be discussed in detail in the chapter.

Research Question 1:
How do employees in Australian academia experience workplace bullying?

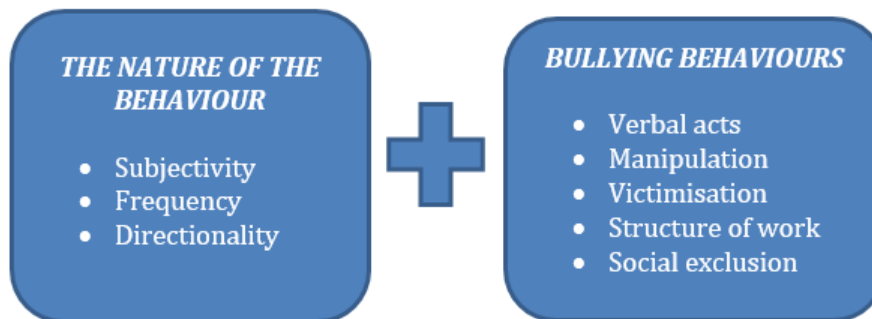


Figure 14: Summary of findings relating to Research Question #1 for academic staff

As Figure 14 shows, two key themes emerged regarding this research question. The first related to the nature of bullying behaviour itself, as defined by the participants; and the second concerned the behaviours which participants termed as bullying. Each of these themes comprised of sub-themes, which are detailed below in turn.

4.1.1 THE NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOUR

The first theme that emerged from the interviews was the very nature of bullying behaviour as experienced by the academic staff members. As observed by Chan-Mok, Caponecchia, and Winder (2014), there are multiple characteristics which define the nature of bullying. Across the interviews, this study's participants also attributed certain characteristics to the behaviour; indicating that it was the nature of the behaviour which leads individuals to label it as bullying. Different sub-themes relating to the behaviour's nature were identified, which are elaborated below.

SUBJECTIVITY

Recent research (e.g. Gaffney, DreMarco, Hofmeyer, Vessey, & Budin, 2012; Nielsen & Knardahl, 2015; Samnani, 2013) suggests that subjectivity plays a vital role in workplace bullying scenarios. Participants in this study identified two different aspects of subjectivity. Firstly, supporting Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) which found bullying to be a subjective behaviour, this study's participants also reported that it was their perception of the behaviour which determined it as bullying, irrespective of the alleged perpetrators' intentions. While echoing similar views, Giorgi (2010) contended that individuals' perception of a particular behaviour often resulted in it being identified as bullying. Secondly, it was found that subjectivity made it difficult for the victims to formally prove the occurrences of workplace bullying; an approach also supported

by Cowan (2012). Findings in both these aspects related to the behaviour's subjectivity are detailed below.

ROLE OF INTENTION

Highlighting the role of intention, a recurring aspect that determined the behaviour as being bullying, was the way in which it was viewed by an individual at the receiving end; a finding supported in literature (e.g. Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2011; Giorgi, 2010; Rooyen & McCormack, 2013). Regardless of whether the perpetrators claimed that their intention was not to bully, if the victims felt bullied by the behaviour, then in the victims' eyes, bullying had occurred; reinforcing the behaviour's subjective interpretation. If the victims perceived the behaviour as being bullying, then in their view, they were being bullied. One academic commented:

“Well, bullying is in the eye of the beholder. And well it should be. What I am willing to accept may be different from what someone else is willing to accept.”

(Academic staff #7, female)

It is indicated above that the intention of alleged perpetrator may not be as important as how the victim may interpret the behaviour and define bullying. Apart from highlighting this aspect, the above quote also indicates that each individual has a different threshold of enduring bullying behaviours. There was general consensus among the participants that the alleged perpetrator's intention to bully or not, did not matter to the victims; but that the actions were regarded as bullying by the individuals who experienced the behaviour. Highlighting this aspect, a senior academic stated:

“I think that I have been bullied, he may have differed though [sic]. But I am the one who was affected. What he was doing towards me was making me feel that I am not respected, and for me, that was bullying.” (Academic staff #3, male)

This quote reaffirms that it is the individuals' view of the behaviour they are being subjected to which defines a behaviour as being bullying. It is this opinion of victims that counts, as it is they who are affected by the behaviour, and not the perpetrators. The above quote not only highlighted the importance of individual's perception, it went further to justify it as well. Individuals may have different views of the same behaviour and may also have different levels of tolerance towards it. Although uniform rules apply to everyone equally at a workplace, the individual level of endurance towards certain behaviours also tend to guide victims' perception in viewing those behaviours as bullying; highlighting the role played by individuals' level of tolerance. Some people may have a high threshold towards withstanding bullying, but others may not be that strong, or may view the behaviour itself as being unacceptable. Echoing similar views, Omari and Sharma (2016) also highlight that individuals may differ in their interpretation of particular behaviours, based on their own perceptions. In both the cases above, however, this study found the perceived intention on the part of the alleged perpetrator to be irrelevant, while classifying behaviours as bullying. This research found it important to highlight the role of individual perception, as it is the first step towards identifying certain behaviours as bullying. Other factors, such as national and organisational culture, may also play a role in labelling behaviours as bullying and are discussed later in the section on influencing factors.

DIFFICULT TO PROVE

The sometimes covert and subjective nature of bullying makes it difficult for victims to provide objective evidence that bullying has occurred. The difficulty of providing compelling objective evidence to substantiate allegations of bullying made academic participants reluctant to formally report or complain about the behaviour. In their research on workplace bullying, other scholars (e.g. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011b; Gaffney et al., 2012) have also made similar claims, strengthening this study's finding relating to subjectivity. Highlighting this aspect, an academic participant stated:

“Another reason that I did not want to raise this [bullying] formally was that I didn't think that I could win. It is very difficult to prove.” (Academic staff #2, male)

Similar submissions were also made by other academic members of staff. One academic shared her experience of bullying:

“If one wants to take steps, then one has to first identify and then prove bullying. And this is very difficult because bullying can be very subtle and disguised. It can be as simple as ignoring someone, and you really can't do anything about it. This is hard to define and much harder to put a stop to. If somebody says that they are being bullied, there should be a support system for them, not the HR [Human Resources] we have, which just tells you that you think you are being bullied, now go ahead and prove it.” (Academic staff #1, female)

The above quotes are significant in a number of ways. Primarily, they highlighted that the first step to stop bullying is to identify it and be capable of proving the behaviour as being bullying, in order to make it stop. The subtle and covert nature of bullying makes it difficult for individuals to prove it.

Academic participants saw their institutions' Human Resources (hereafter referred to as 'HR') or other similar departments, as putting the onus on the complaining victim to prove an allegation of bullying, rather than as providing support or assistance for staff who felt they had been bullied. Participants in this study highlighted the lack of an effective support system in their universities to assist bullying victims, while pointing towards significant flaws in their institutions' current HR policies, which need to recognise bullying. Some participants also underlined the need to spread awareness about workplace bullying and incorporate measures in organisational policies to support victims of bullying. The role of HR and organisational policies is discussed later in the section on influencing factors.

FREQUENCY

While highlighting the behaviour's frequency, researchers (e.g. Branch & Murray, 2015; Devonish, 2013) conventionally view bullying as an ongoing behaviour. Most of the academic participants likewise identified bullying as a behaviour encountered over an extended period of time. A senior academic recalled his experience of being bullied:

“Even though I was in quite a senior academic position, it [bullying] involved the business manager who was frequently speaking to me in a fairly aggressive

way and saying ‘I want this done’ or ‘I want that done’. She was the business manager and because of this particular person’s own perception of her own importance, she would be like that to a lot of people, not just to me.” (Academic staff #4, male)

Here, a professional member of staff’s formal position facilitated the frequent bullying of an academic not necessarily junior to the alleged perpetrator. The academic quoted above not only experienced bullying himself, but also witnessed others being bullied in a similar fashion. The issue of unreasonable work allocation mentioned above is discussed further in this chapter. Parallel observations made by other academics also described bullying in similar terms. One academic succinctly summarised her experience of being bullied over a period of time:

“As for stopping it [bullying], no one stopped it. It was for a fairly ongoing period, say for a year or so.” (Academic staff #7, female)

Apart from highlighting the frequency of the behaviour as on-going, the quote above also indicates that no steps were taken to curtail the behaviour; an aspect discussed later in this chapter. For the individuals quoted above, bullying was a behaviour, which happened continuously over a period of time, and was essentially a successive chain of actions. Reiterating the role of intention, discussed earlier, most of the academic participants saw the victim’s perception as determining whether behaviour could be categorised as bullying. It may be suggested that victims did not give importance to whether the alleged perpetrators’ intention was to bully or not; a viewpoint also

supported by researchers (e.g. Giorgi, 2010) as well as legislative frameworks (e.g. the *Fair Work Act 2014*). The other specific forms of bullying such as undermining, are covered further in the section on bullying behaviours.

DIRECTIONALITY

Research (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011b; Hodgins, MacCurtain, & Mannix-McNamara, 2014) contends that workplace bullying may occur in different directions such as downwards (superior to subordinate), horizontal (peer to peer) and upwards (subordinate to superior), as illustrated in the figure below (Figure 15). While the majority of academics interviewed for this study admitted to have suffered downward bullying, none of participants brought forward any case of horizontal bullying. Two of the interviewees also shared their experiences of having suffered upward bullying, which will be discussed later in this section.

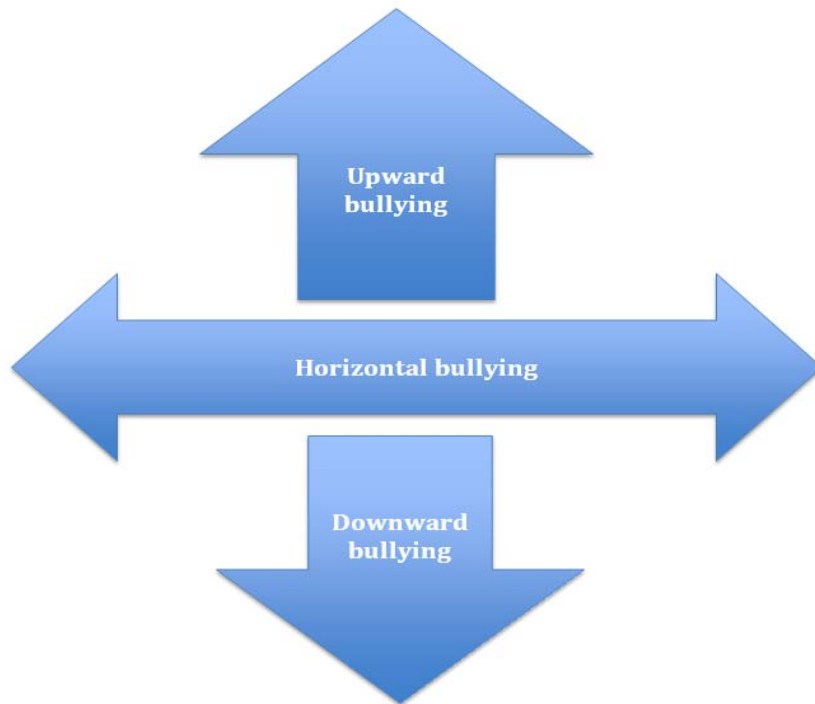


Figure 15: Directionality of workplace bullying in Australian academia

The majority of academic participants in this study reported to have suffered bullying from their superiors; a behaviour referred to as downward bullying in literature (e.g. Forssell, 2016; Tsuno & Kawakami, 2015). Most of academics identified power to be a key underlying factor which facilitated the occurrence of downward bullying, as aspect which has been reported later in the section on influencing factors. Indicating the power differential between herself and her superior, an academic shared her experience of being bullied:

“The person’s the same age as me, it’s a she, was in a higher position than me at that time. And I knew that what that person was trying to do was actually an act of bullying by belittling what I had done.” (Academic staff #5, female)

Apart from highlighting the element of power, the individual quoted above also noted the demographic characteristics of the alleged perpetrator like age and gender. Some participants found it difficult to articulate their experience, but nonetheless, identified the alleged perpetrators to be at higher level; indicating the occurrence of downward bullying.

“I really can’t put it [bullying] in words. She is higher than me and she makes full use of all the power she has over me.” (Academic staff #1, female)

While power played a key role in instances of downward bullying, this study also found two exceptional cases of upward bullying. Researchers (e.g. Rayner & Cooper, 2006; Thirlwall, 2015) have contended that instances of upward bullying are rare and

seldom reported, as majority of victims perceive that their experience of bullying does fit the traditional view of the behaviour. As exceptional cases, two senior academics admitted to have been bullied by their subordinates:

“It was one individual. It started off where we’d been peers and then I was promoted and he was now reporting to me, and he wasn’t happy about that, the change of the power level. And I felt like he was constantly trying to undermine my position.” (Academic staff #8, female)

Apart from reporting upward bullying, the above quote demonstrates the role power plays in bullying occurrences and how undermining someone can amount to bullying; aspects which have been reported later in this chapter. While the above participant was in a higher position than the alleged perpetrator, another participant reported the occurrence of upward bullying, where both (the victim and the alleged perpetrator) were in senior academic levels:

“Upward bullying, yes. While we would be at the same position rank as in professor, but my role was different in that I had a managerial responsibility and they didn’t. Because I was in a position where I asked for something to be done and the person I asked it of perceived that as overstepping my role. Oh, well and the worst would be sitting in my office and shouting at me and telling me how she was out to get me and make certain I would lose my job.” (Academic staff #7, female)

In the instance quoted above, both the victim and the alleged perpetrator were at the senior professorial level. It was found that this particular victim, although being in a managerial capacity and the line manager of the alleged perpetrator, was at a similar academic level at the university; a factor which may have allowed the alleged perpetrator to engage in such behaviours in the first place. Other bullying behaviours, like verbal acts are also mentioned above and are reported later in the next section on bullying behaviours. Apart from these two instances of upward bullying, none of the other academics participating in this study reported any instance of being bullied by their subordinates; indicating that upward bullying may not be common among academics and seldom brought to notice. While majority of this study's participants were female, it may also be observed that the only two academic interviewees who reported upward bullying were female as well; perhaps highlighting the role of gender in bullying scenarios. This aspect has been explored later in the section on individual factors influencing bullying.

4.1.2 BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

The second theme that emerged from the interviews was the different behaviours that individuals perceived as being the way of the bully (i.e. how the behaviour unfolded). Similar views are also held by Einarsen and Nielsen (2015), although in a context other than academia. Across the interviews among the academic staff, the researcher identified certain behaviours, commonly identified as bullying; giving rise to various sub-themes in this category. These bullying behaviours relate to verbal acts, manipulation, victimisation, structure of work and social exclusion; as described below.

VERBAL ACTS

Verbal acts range from screaming, shouting, abusing others to spreading of rumours (Ryan, 2016). Academics participating in this study highlighted verbal acts by the alleged perpetrator as a form of bullying behaviour. Given the limited number of academic participants in this study, the only strong theme relating to verbal acts that emerged was the spreading of rumours. Although one academic interviewee did label shouting as bullying, the majority of participants reported to have felt bullied by the rumours that were verbally spread about them by the alleged perpetrator.

SPREADING OF RUMOURS

Spreading rumours was another significant form of workplace bullying that emerged from the interviews among the academic staff members. Research (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011b; Eisenberg & Matthew, 2005; Hurley, Hutchinson, Bradbury, & Brwone, 2016) has consistently shown rumours to be an effective tool for bullying often used by the alleged perpetrators. Spreading rumours was not only an issue between the victim and the alleged perpetrator, but victims also viewed it as an attempt to provoke other members in the workplace against them. One academic highlighted how the rumours spread about her not only resulted in her feeling bullied, but also led her to perceive such behaviour as undermining and white anting; aspects explored later in this study:

“The problem is just not the person who is bullying, but also the fact that he tries to instigate a group of people to be adverse towards you, by spreading rumours.”

(Academic staff #1, female)

Other participants also echoed similar views. One academic reported:

“I can’t tell you the exact comments she [alleged perpetrator] was using because I don’t remember. But her objective was to spread a negative about me in the workplace.” (Academic staff #2, male)

These quotes highlighted that spreading rumours about an individual changes bullying from being an issue between the alleged perpetrator and the victim, as it brings others in to the picture, who are then fed with negative information about the victim. This not only tarnishes the victim’s image generally in the workplace, but depending on the people who hear these rumours, may turn them against the victim. This may make the individuals’ life more difficult in an academic workplace, as it may inhibit the level of support they get from co-workers, and may even restrict others from doing collaborative academic work with the victims. Such bullying behaviours may have a latent negative impact on the overall quality of higher education delivered at these institutions; which may have implications for the community beyond. This also brings into notice the issue of witnesses being drawn into the bullying scenario, echoing the observations made by Paull, Omari, and Standen (2012). These aspects have reported further in this chapter.

MANIPULATION

Peyton (2003) and Treadway, Shaughnessy, Breland, Yang, and Reeves (2013) highlight manipulation as a behaviour significantly viewed by victims as being bullying. A majority of participants in this study admitted to have experienced

different forms of manipulation at the hand of the alleged perpetrator, which they regarded as bullying.

UNDERMINING BEHAVIOUR

Hershcovis (2011) identifies undermining an individual as a major manipulative action aimed at bullying that particular individual. Engaging in undermining behaviour towards the victim was also reported amongst the interviews of academic staff. It was found that by undermining the victim, the alleged perpetrators aimed to undermine the confidence of individual workers, ultimately targeting to reduce their working capacities. An academic member of staff, who was bullied by his supervisor, reported that:

“She kept on undermining me. It may be because she didn’t like me raising issues with her. She had the power to treat me and judge my work as she wanted, even unreasonably at many times. Definitely she treated me very differently [to the others] and in an aggressive manner.” (Academic staff #2, male)

Some of the participants found it hard to describe being undermined in precise words, but nonetheless, admitted the level of negative impact such behaviour had on them. An academic contended:

“She makes me feel that I am just not good enough. She tries to hurt me as a person, more than as a co-worker.” (Academic staff #1, female)

Here, such undermining behaviour was viewed by the victim as being an arbitrary yet a measured attempt to sabotage their work and eventually threaten their professional standing as well as personal well-being. A latent aspect which emerged from this study was the difference in the official positions of the alleged perpetrator and the victim, indicating towards a power differential; mentioned before and to be explored further in the section on individual factors.

SETTING THE VICTIM UP FOR FAILURE

Another aspect of bullying behaviour was to set up the victim in such a way that his/her failure at the given situation/task was certain (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). This aspect is different from undermining behaviour as herein the alleged perpetrator creates situations or conditions which would lead to the victim's ultimate failure at work (Ritzman, 2016); while by undermining behaviour, the perpetrator tries to weaken the victim's self-confidence in his/her own working capacities (Pilch & Turska, 2015). Some academic staff members reported being deliberately set up to fail at a work task, so as to jeopardise their standing among the workforce and employment at the institution. Discussing her experience of this kind of behaviour, an academic staff member remarked:

“I was underestimated and even at times, set up for failures. It was a very difficult time for me.” (Academic staff #6, female)

Other participants who witnessed this behaviour also mentioned the role seniority may play in such incidences. An academic member of staff commented:

“The one thing I’ve witnessed is senior members of staff manipulating junior members of staff, setting them up to fail, or setting situations where they don’t want that person. They can’t just get rid of them but they can put them in a position where they’re not going to succeed, and therefore they’ll give them evidence (sic) so that they can get rid of them.” (Academic staff #9, female)

These data extracts indicated that in situations where the perpetrators could not directly intervene to make the victims leave the job they created situations which ensured the victim’s failure at work, a justification they would later have used to get the person removed from the organisation. This also underlines the issue of regulation and policies in large bureaucratic organisations such as universities, which makes it hard to remove people. Such scenarios are, however, changing with the advent of NPM in the Australian higher education sector, which has given rise to temporary employment in academia; an aspect explored later in this chapter. The issue of junior academics being bullied by their senior colleagues was also highlighted in this study, which again points towards the power imbalances in the higher education sector.

SELECTIVE APPLICATION OF POLICIES

Hurley et al. (2016) contend that workplace bullying can occur in the guise of policies being applied selectively only to certain individuals. This study also found selective implementation of policies by the alleged perpetrators as a significant form of bullying. Alleged perpetrators chose to apply a particular policy to a specific individual, to his/her disadvantage while choosing to ignore the same policies in regard to others; highlighting the differential treatment. An academic aptly explains the situation:

“And you know that managers can surround themselves with people like lackeys, who model themselves to be superior to others. If they did something wrong, it was beyond censure. And I did anything wrong, I was in for it.”
(Academic staff #4, male)

An academic, working from an open-space setting stated her experience of such a situation, tying it with the issue of organisational productivity:

“She will pick on me. Others will be sitting at their desks and using Facebook, while I would be working hard and still she would say that I should do more, while others just sitting there, doing nothing, go unnoticed. Their productivity is less and no matter how much I did, she would never be satisfied with me. She would never be satisfied. I don’t know why it is so.” (Academic staff #1, female)

Here, the alleged perpetrator reportedly chose to overlook the obvious lack of, or less productivity of other workers and decided to target a particular individual, who regarded herself as more productive than others. It may be suggested that such bullying actions also tend to negatively influence organisational productivity; an area which has been explored later in the section on organisational consequences. This study found that perpetrators of bullying often try to hide their behaviours under the guise of applying organisational policies, while in reality they are manipulating individuals using these policies as means to do so.

VICTIMISATION

Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) identify victimisation as an act of workplace bullying, aimed at tormenting those individuals, who dare to bring such behaviour to authorities' notice by blowing the whistle. As noted by Lee, Brotheridge, and Bjørkelo (2013), individuals who reported workplace bullying through whistle-blowing, often had to face further victimisation. Consistent with this view, this study also found that those victims, who decided to whistle-blow and formally file a complaint against the bullying behaviour, felt being victimised due to raising their voice against the behaviour. This also made individuals question the credibility of the university system; wherein such behaviours go unchecked and people who bring these to public notice are penalised for doing so. An academic deliberated the reasons which prevented him from seeking a formal redress to the bullying situation:

“So I didn't really want to go higher up and say “she's bullying me” and then go through all that. I just didn't feel that that was going to get me anywhere. Like a lot of things it might have a negative impact. And particularly because she was very powerful and popular at the time.” (Academic staff #4, male)

While the above quote highlighted the participant's fear of further victimisation and possible career limiting outcome, it also indicated the lack of trust in university systems to effectively deal with bullying. The role of power is also highlighted in the above statement. Such power not only comes from a position of authority in a hierarchy but also from networks of influence. Some participants also tied such

victimisation to possible damage to the institutions' public image. An academic staff member observed:

“For all of us it simply became a witch hunt and in the end everyone was cleared [of bullying] and no action was taken against any of them [alleged perpetrators], but all three [victims] left the school. And it [bullying] really damaged those people but it also damaged the reputation of the school.” (Academic staff #10, female)

The unfortunate plight of the victims who dared to complain against bullying behaviours, is evidently highlighted by the participants in this study. The use of the term “witch hunt” signified the level of victimisation experienced by these individuals, who left the organisation being dissatisfied with the formal process and the resultant outcome. Lee et al. (2013) link such scenarios with incidences of whistleblowing, wherein the individuals are also victimised and almost always have to leave the organisation for daring to do the right thing. Participants in this study reported that such behaviours not only damaged the individuals, but when they are brought in open, may severely dent the institution's image in the wider arena.

STRUCTURE OF WORK

According to this study's participants, alleged perpetrator's interference with the structure of work being allocated to victims was a common form of bullying. Three distinct themes of being unfairly managed, unreasonable workloads, and limiting work participation emerged from the data collected from academic staff.

UNFAIRLY MANAGED

Unfair management of an individual was a recurrent aspect which was highlighted by academic members of staff, while sharing their experiencing of workplace bullying; a finding which is consistent with the literature (e.g. Boddy, 2011; Harvey, Treadway, & Heames, 2007; McAvoy & Murtagh, 2003). By unfairly managing the victim, the alleged perpetrator not only created hurdles in the victim's professional development, but also undermined the victim's level of self-confidence. An academic stated:

“There were two of us reporting to her and at the end of the year, we both had the exact number of publications. So, I didn't do anything less or different from the other person, but I guess that I was being unfairly as well as robustly managed. My draft papers started coming back with red marks and rewrites and it came to a point where all my work was coming back with all red, none of my drafts were getting passed, everything I did was questioned. I was humiliated both in group meetings as well as one to one meetings. No matter what I did and how many times I did, it was always wrong.” (Academic staff #2, male)

Similar statements were made by other participants. Apart from describing how she was unfairly managed by her superior, an academic also mentioned the preferential treatment of those in the 'good books' of the alleged perpetrator:

“But even if it's somebody that they like and the person had forgotten to do something they might in the corridor say 'I still haven't got that thing from you' and that person will go 'oh yeah, okay' and do it. If it's a person that they don't

like they'll send them an email saying 'you still haven't returned your whatever it is' and they'll copy someone in so that that person knows. And then they've also started to create a trail of evidence. They'll keep reminding this person that they haven't done it. So instead of sending the email to the whole team and saying 'hey guys, don't forget it's due, I have received some but not others' they're treating them differently (sic)." (Academic staff #10, female)

The individuals quoted above viewed themselves being judged microscopically as well as treated differently in comparison to others in the workplace. These individuals perceived their peers as being judged preferentially to them. This kind of bullying serves as a form of public ridicule, with individuals being targeted in public forums, like group meetings and emails not restricted to two parties, leading the victims to feel humiliated. Such public ridicule also carried the potential to make the victims lose self-confidence, hampering their growth and development in academic workplaces.

UNREASONABLE WORKLOADS

Interfering with the amount of workload allocated to an individual emerged as a significant factor, which the alleged perpetrators of the behaviour used to bully others; a view also supported by Berlingieri (2015). Participants in this study reported that by putting excessive workloads on individuals, the perpetrators wanted to force victims to look for other avenues of employment. In this regard, one academic remarked:

"My manager wanted me out. I don't know exactly why, but I knew that we didn't have a good relationship. He started putting on me unreasonable demands

[sic], like forcing me to teach subjects I was not qualified for.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above quote highlights the way in which the alleged perpetrator unreasonably interferes with the victim’s workload. In this instance, bullying occurred by unreasonably forcing the victim to teach subjects beyond his expertise, which not only made working difficult for the victim, but may have also resulted in poor quality of course delivery to the students. This aspect reinforces the view that bullying does not only affect the victims, but also has a larger negative implication for the community beyond, particularly the students. Other participants also reported similar experiences. A senior academic, shared her experience of been given unreasonable workload, as follows:

“I was told ‘no, the decision’s been made, this is what’s happening ... and once again you’re at [location’s name] campus at night’. So there wasn’t a fair sharing around of the workload [sic].” (Academic staff #9, female)

These data extracts highlight the manner in which the perpetrators used the structure of work as a means to bully others. In the above extracts, this was done in a number of ways, like allocating teaching of those subjects to the victim for which they were not qualified and assigning unfavourable teaching session times to a particular individual. It may be suggested that these actions were taken as a deliberate attempt to make the victims feel uncomfortable and force them to think of alternate employment.

The findings suggest that such behaviours were primarily aimed at making the victim leave the organisation.

LIMITING WORK PARTICIPATION

Limiting the amount of work allocated to an individual has been identified as bullying by various researchers (e.g. Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereira, 2002; Gardner et al., 2016). An important action highlighted by academic staff related to the attempts by the alleged perpetrator to limit the work being allocated to the victim in the workplace. Apart from reporting instances of the alleged perpetrators not allocating any work to the victims, some participants also noted that these perpetrators were persuading others to do the same. An academic recalled his experience of being bullied:

“She not only kept finding faults in my work all the time, but also told others about how stupid I was and that they should think twice before giving me any work.” (Academic staff #2, male)

Similar experiences were also echoed by other participants; some of whom witnessed others being bullied, indicating that bullying not only affects the victim, but also creates a negative work environment for others. An academic member of staff shared her experience of witnessing a co-worker being bullied:

“What had happened was that person was working for her, and it came to a stage where he wanted to work with others. Because of her behaviour, it came to the

stage where he was in the emergency room with palpitations and he had to go and see the psychologist. And she went around telling others ‘don’t give him any work to do. He’s not to work with any of you’. And she had some friends.”

(Academic staff #5, female)

The above experience was unique, as it demonstrates the view of a witness who not only observed the bullying behaviour, but also sheds light on the alleged perpetrator’s attempt to enlist the assistance of bystanders to further bully the victim. The respondent witnessed that this alleged perpetrator, in pure disregard to the victim’s health condition due to bullying, tried her best to convince others not to work with him nor give him any work duties; effectively limiting the victim’s work participation. This aspect differs from social exclusion. While social exclusion resulted in an individual being isolated and excluded from social activities at a workplace, herein the victim’s employment prospects are jeopardised by the alleged perpetrator through restricting work. The above quotes also highlighted that the alleged perpetrator(s) were well-connected individuals, who could use their professional networks to jeopardise the future employment prospects of the victim. This aspect signified the importance of professional networks in a higher education institution and the role they could play in workplace bullying scenarios. The consequences of workplace bullying were also explored in this study and have been discussed later in this chapter.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The literature reviewed (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Elliott & Harris, 2012) highlighted social exclusion as one of the major bullying actions; this also emerged as a finding in this study. Most of the participants also pointed towards social exclusion

as a significant action, which they viewed as bullying. Echoing similar views, Salin and Hoel (2013) further suggest that women more often use social exclusion as a bullying tactic than men, highlighting the role of gender in bullying scenarios; an aspect explored later in this thesis. Individuals can be socially excluded in a number of ways and participants in this study reported different forms of social exclusion. One member of academic staff stated that:

“I would just sit in the office and do my own thing, because I was just excluded from everything else. I was socially excluded, so if there was a meeting, I wasn’t called and hence, I wouldn’t have to be there.” (Academic staff #2, male)

This quote signified that the particular individual was cut off from most of the activities at the workplace, which also led to him to have a feeling of being isolated in the workplace. This in turn reduced the level of collaborative team work, vital in an academic work environment, as the respondent limited himself to the confines of his office. Other participants reported a more profound version of social exclusion, which had an element of threat in it. One senior academic stated:

“It was around the way the person spoke to me and the way the person didn’t speak, so social exclusion, the way that you would pass in the corridor and would be ignored, so they spoke to someone there but you didn’t exist. I even heard all kinds of conversations being reported about me, so there was general exclusion and intimidation.” (Academic staff #9, female)

The victim also reported feeling intimidated by being ignored in the public areas, which made her feel insecure about her own standing, she also heard unfavourable discussions about her behind her back. Bullying in the form of spreading rumours has been discussed earlier in this chapter. The majority of participants in this study highlighted the very basic form of social exclusion that is, being ignored. Many academic staff had similar experiences of social exclusion, pointing it out to be one of the major forms of bullying behaviours among academic circles.

4.1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - RESEARCH QUESTION #1

The first research question explored two aspects of workplace bullying, the nature of the behaviour and the actions that were reported to constitute bullying. Participants in this study generally perceived bullying as an ongoing and subjective behaviour which victims often find difficult to prove. These findings accord with recent research on workplace bullying (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015; Devonish, 2013; Gaffney et al., 2012; Hogh et al., 2016), which also defined the behaviour in similar terms, although in contexts different from this study. This study also found that bullying actions constituted verbal acts, manipulation, victimisation, unreasonable workload and social exclusion. Similar acts were also reported in other recent studies on workplace bullying (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Elliott & Harris, 2012; Gilani, Cavico, & Mujtaba, 2014; Hurley et al., 2016; Karpinski, Dzurec, Fitzgerald, Bromley, & Meyers, 2013), further validating this study's findings in an academic environment in the Australian context. Although these findings accord with established literature, their relevance in the context of Australian higher education sector is unique to this study.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION #2: THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

The second research question explores the forces that drive or influence bullying behaviours in Australian higher education sector. Salin (2003) and Ramsay, Troth, and Branch (2011), established that a variety of individual and organisational factors play an active role in the occurrence of workplace bullying. In accordance with the theoretical framework for this study, organisational factors have been identified as being external and internal. For this question, detailed findings are presented for each theme beginning with the organisational factors before turning to the individual factors. The diagram below (Figure 16) summarises the findings in this area, which are thereafter explained further.

Research Question 2: How are the bullying behaviours driven by various forces in Australian academia?

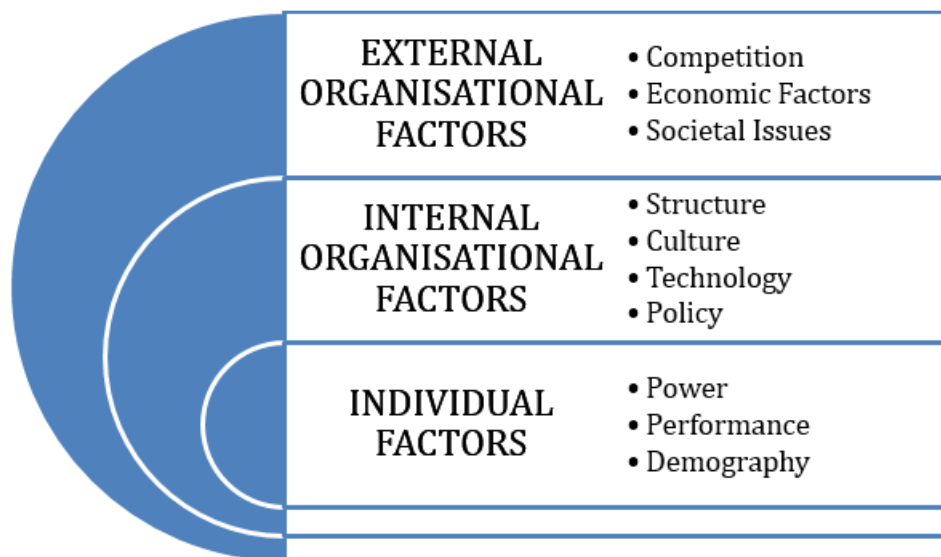


Figure 16: Summary of findings relating to Research Question #2 for academic staff

4.2.1 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The first theme identified from the data collected from academic staff was the external (sectoral) factors to the organisation, which influenced the bullying. In accordance with this study's theoretical framework, the three sub-themes which emerged in this study were: competition, economic factors and societal issues; depicted in Figure 17 and reported thereafter. Although not found in this study, there are other external factors such as legislative factors (Samson & Daft, 2015), which may also influence the occurrence of workplace bullying (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). In line with the views of Fredman and Doughney (2012), the global environment of the higher education sector may also influence the external organisational factors, although this was not explicitly acknowledged by this study's participants.



Figure 17: External organisational factors influencing workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector

COMPETITION

Researchers (e.g. Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Shin & Jung, 2014; Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013) suggest that the higher education sector around the world, as well as in Australia (Dow, 2014), is marked by strong competition. The majority of participants in this study also acknowledged the increased level of competition among academics, as one of the factors that may have provided circumstances for individuals to engage in bullying behaviours. It was also reported that a lot of importance was laid upon individuality among academics, which may also be a triggering point for bullying to occur. One academic, highlighting this aspect, commented:

“I think it [bullying behaviour] is because there is a lot of emphasis on individual output and they don’t know the meaning of the word “collaboration”. And until today the rewards are still individual although they do say there’s collaboration whatever, that’s a lot of lip service. There is no reward for collaborating. The only rewards are for your personal... that is one (sic).” (Academic staff #5, female)

The participant quoted above signified the prominence and the value placed on individual performance in academic workplaces, which makes individuals wary of pooling resources together. Individual performances are evaluated and rewarded in academia, which leads to a reluctant attitude among academic staff to work with others with shared objectives. This may have adverse consequences for universities in the form of its decreased overall academic scholarship and doubling up of resources. Similar views were presented by other participants as well. A senior member of

academic staff commented on the nature of career progression due to increased competition in academia as a factor which influenced bullying:

“I guess here where you have to apply for promotion you have to put yourself forward and everything is on an individual basis. I think it can fester a bullying environment and not enough people talk about it because people are scared. I think there’s not enough discussion about that.” (Academic staff #7, female)

This study highlighted how career progression in academia can be one of the factors that motivate individuals to engage in bullying behaviours. It was reported, in the quest to climb the career ladder, individuals did not hesitate to engage in bullying others in order to secure their own positions. The implementation of NPM practices in the higher education sector creates an environment of intensified competition (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016), wherein some individuals may resort to bullying tactics to get ahead of their competitors.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Academic staff interviewed for this study reported different economic factors prevailing in the higher education sector that influenced the incidence of workplace bullying. There are two major economic factors that have been identified in this study, which are elaborated below.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Budgetary controls and cutbacks have led to curtailed finances across the higher education sector around the world (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014) as well as in Australia

(Dow, 2014). As Lokuwaduge and Armstrong (2015) observe, such cost cutting stems from the sector being governed on corporate principles of profitability. A recurring theme that was observed from the data collected was the influence of financial constraints in the higher education sector on the occurrence and tolerance of bullying behaviours. Participants in this study reported that the prevailing budgetary measures in the sector resulted in cost-cutting and employees being laid off; creating a sense of insecurity amongst the workforce. Due to this sense of insecurity, individuals who were able to retain their jobs did not find it advisable to raise their voice against being bullied; this implicitly encouraged the alleged perpetrators to continue with the behaviour. An academic contended:

“I think there was a lot of passive resistance in that people were very distraught about how things had gone to save money ... so those of us that were left felt really bad that we had a job and these really good people were put out of jobs for financial reasons. Then the ones that were left were basically just bullied, made to feel like your contributions weren't important, no matter what you'd done in the past, no matter what awards or achievements you made, what articles you'd done.” (Academic staff #10, female)

Apart from highlighting the issue of workplace bullying, the above extract also depicted how financial pressures led to staff turnover, an aspect which has been explored further in this chapter. Other participants also admitted being bullied due to prevailing financial constraints. An academic summarised the situation as follows:

“The current market of higher education actually breeds that [bullying] because of all the change management happening, along with the rising financial pressures. It’s like “we’d better not make noise”. And as usual I find that I’m the only one going “neh, neh, neh [sic]”. That’s all, that’s all I’m going to say.”
(Academic staff #5, female)

The above quotes highlighted the circumstances faced by the academics in view of the on-going budgetary controls in the sector. It was reported that these employees had witnessed their co-workers being made redundant due to financial considerations and admitted to have a resultant sense of uncertainty regarding their own prospects. This study found that academics preferred to remain silent about the bullying behaviour they faced, in view of prevailing economic conditions in the sector. It was also indicated that these sectoral conditions also encouraged potential perpetrators of the behaviour to bully others as they knew that their behaviours would not be necessarily challenged.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

The prevailing economic health of the higher education sector has given rise to academics being employed on a casual basis, also known as sessional academics; an aspect highlighted by Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (2016) in its annual report on the sector. In their study about Australian academia, Nadolny and Ryan (2015) attribute such rise in casual employment to the budgetary controls being implemented in the sector. The majority of participants in this research also pointed towards the nature of sessional or casual employment in universities as a key factor which influenced bullying behaviours among the academic staff. Individuals reported that the temporary nature of sessional employment leads to a sense of insecurity among

those employed casually; as they feared that their complaining of bullying behaviour may jeopardise their future employment at the university. It was reported that individuals deemed it more suitable to continue being bullied rather than raise the issue and risk their jobs. Along with highlighting the element of power, discussed later in this chapter, an academic pointed towards the lack of certainty in casual employment:

“I think the culture in the university sector about using casual staff contributes to this [bullying]. The lack of certainty of employment and the fact that you have sessionals [sic], contract staff and tenured staff, creates an [power] imbalance.”

(Academic staff #2, male)

Similar observations were made by other academics as well. One academic, who was employed as a casual when the bullying occurred, recalled:

“I think part of it’s to do with the fact that sessional staff are dispensable, so it used to be the pattern, and it used to happen every semester that you didn’t know what teaching you had right up until very close to the beginning of semester. So you were waiting around wondering “have I got a job?” – all of that sort of thing. So that had a role to play. So I allowed that [bullying] to happen. The culture of sessionals being dispensable was contributed to by the way the hierarchy operated as well. And I added to that by letting it be known that I did want the work and I did need the work.” (Academic staff #9, female)

The above data extracts are representative of the prevailing sense of insecurity experienced by the various academics on temporary contracts or fixed term contracts who were interviewed for this study. The temporary nature of sessional employment created this sense of uncertainty among individuals, where they were not sure if they would be employed for the next academic term. This study found that when sessional academics were bullied, they opted not to complain about it formally, as they perceived that such actions may raise question marks about their future employability. It is also reported that the lack of alternative employment opportunities in the higher education sector also influenced sessional academics to accept bullying behaviours and allow it to continue.

SOCIETAL ISSUES

This study identified that societal issues, in the form of general social attitude towards workplace bullying in universities had an influence on the occurrence of the behaviour; an observation similar to Keashly and Neuman (2010). Participants in this study pointed towards the manner in which bullying was discussed or rather not discussed in universities. They reported that the general reluctance towards discussing bullying situations may be one of the reasons why bullying occurs in the higher education sector. An academic observed:

“It [bullying] is not a very comfortable topic to be talked about, thought about or acted upon, but that’s the part of the reason why it has perpetuated. Because it is a bit taboo hush, hush, these things need to be brought to surface and be openly spoke about.” (Academic staff #3, male)

While the above quote highlighted the need for spreading awareness about bullying amongst the workforce, other participants just reported a general lack of discussion on the subject. An academic stated:

“I think it [a lack of discussion] can fester a bullying environment and not enough people talk about it because people are scared. I think there’s not enough discussion about that. I think one of the reasons why this place [university] is one where you can have that [bullying] is because people don’t speak out.”
(Academic staff #5, female)

The above quotes highlighted the prevailing environment in the higher education institutions, wherein individuals do not find easy to discuss workplace bullying. This reluctance towards discussing bullying behaviours, may encourage the alleged perpetrators to engage in bullying, as they feel immune from any adverse consequences of their behaviours. The participants further reported that if the organisational culture at the universities encouraged constructive debates on workplace bullying, individuals may become more aware about this behaviour. This study found that such openness about the issue may in turn discourage individuals from engaging in such behaviours as they would be well aware that their behaviour would be identified and reported.

4.2.2 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The second theme that emerged from the interviews was the internal factors in the organisation which influence the bullying behaviours among academic staff. Research participants identified several factors in the institutions’ internal environment that play

a vital role in enabling bullying to prevail and continue. In line with this study's theoretical framework, these internal factors were structure, culture, systems and policy; as depicted in the diagram below (Figure 18) and elaborated thereafter.



Figure 18: Internal organisational factors [based on Myloni, Harzing & Mirza (2007) and Black & Hanson (2014)] influencing workplace bullying in Australian academia

STRUCTURE

Universities are known to have rigid hierarchical structures, as widely reported in the literature (e.g. Hollis, 2015; McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, & Thomas, 2008). The data gathered from the academic staff pointed towards the role of hierarchical organisational structures in universities in providing circumstances which encouraged bullying behaviours. Participants reported that being in a hierarchical structure, they felt that they had no support from other avenues in the organisation, as hierarchies

created power differentials, which deterred others from helping them. One academic stated:

“And as you know, there is always a power imbalance in universities, as they are hierarchical institutions. If he didn’t have any power over me, he would not have been in a position to exercise any bullying behaviour on me [sic].”

(Academic staff #10, female)

While most participants acknowledged power to have influenced bullying; others accredited the alleged perpetrators’ own behaviour to have invigorated by these structures. An academic echoed this view:

“It was this person’s individual behaviour, which was kind of encouraged by the hierarchical workplace culture of the university.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above quotes depict how hierarchies in universities may prove to be an enabling circumstance for bullying to occur and continue. This study found hierarchies in higher education institutions to be an important factor influencing bullying behaviours. In accordance with this study’s theoretical framework, analysis of data collected on organisational culture was in line with the CVF by Cameron and Quinn (2011). The influence of work culture on the occurrence of bullying has been discussed next in this chapter. Based on the findings, the organisational culture in the universities can be termed as ‘hierarchy’ (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 66), in accordance with the CVF. It was reported that universities have well-defined hierarchical structures, which exert

a high degree of control over individuals. This study found that these structures and the resultant power differentials may be an initiating factor for bullying to occur in the first place.

CULTURE

Tsui, Zhang, Wang, Xin, and Wu (2006, p. 117) define organisational culture as “a set of core values consensually shared by organizational members”. Organisational culture was another key internal factor that was identified from the interviews conducted with the academic staff. Other researchers (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Fogg, 2008; Pilch & Turska, 2015) have also identified organisational culture as a major factor which influences workplace bullying. Participants reported that organisational culture of the university at which they were working played a major role in either condemning or condoning the behaviour. The way in which higher education institutions are organised play a significant role in determining their culture. As discussed in the literature review (e.g. Favaloro, 2015), universities are structure-based organisations, where the workforce can broadly be divided into academic staff, responsible for teaching and research; and professional staff, responsible for providing support services to academics as well as students (Pignata & Winefield, 2015). The organisational culture in a university is not only characterised with strict hierarchies, as discussed earlier, but also with well-defined work duties. The two-tiered workforce comprising of academics and professional staff with distinct job descriptions, also shape the universities’ work culture. The diverse aspects of organisational culture in universities, as identified in this study, are reported below.

LEADERSHIP

Catley et al. (2013), and Francioli, Conway, et al. (2016), contend that leaders of an organisation shape its culture and it is the leaders' approach towards workplace bullying, which determines whether it is accepted or abhorred at the organisational level. The subject of leadership and its role in handling bullying situations was one of the key aspects that was highlighted by this study's participants. This study found that the way the leaders responded to bullying behaviours determined whether it was to be tolerated or condemned by others. In a majority of instances, it was reported that the leaders or individuals in higher positions were themselves the perpetrators of the bullying behaviours; a view also supported in the literature (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015). One academic member of staff commented:

“Well, she was the culture, wasn't she? She was the Director and leaders make the culture and shape the culture. How they behave trickles down to other people. I do say that it depends upon leadership within an organisation, whether it is acceptable behaviour at the leadership level and then it trickles down and then it becomes a norm. After all, it is the leaders who define what an acceptable behaviour is and what isn't. How Bill Gates behaved, that's is the Microsoft culture today and how she behaved was the culture of the Centre.” (Academic staff #2, male)

The above extract pointed at another very important aspect of leaders defining the culture at the workplace. If a leader at an organisation engages in bullying another individual, then this behaviour is seen by other workers as acceptable, and may prompt

them to engage in similar behaviours themselves in the future. By contrast, some participants reported that leaders, through their actions, could prevent bullying from occurring in the first place. An academic remarked on the leader's role in preventing bullying, as follows:

“I honestly think that may be this thing should be revisited in the sense that we get sent things by the union, but we don't get anyone personally, like say Head of School or someone, actually saying “right, bullying will not be tolerated” or whatever.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above quotes highlight the view that it is the leaders at a workplace, who define the culture of an organisation, through their action and behaviours. When leaders themselves engage in bullying others, the behaviours are well observed by others in the organisation who take it as an accepted way to treat others. Similarly, silence on the part of leaders in response to a bullying situation, and their lack of asserting zero tolerance towards such behaviours, also sends a covert message that the behaviour is tolerated. In a way, the above data extracts from this study signified that leaders can be viewed as being the embodiment of an organisation's culture, and they set a benchmark of behaviours, through their own actions, for others to follow.

TOLERANCE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

A recurring theme that emerged from the academic staff interviews was the tolerance of bullying behaviour in the universities. Fogg (2008), and Keashly and Neuman (2010), also observed universities to have an implicit tolerance towards workplace bullying, while outwardly portraying complete disregard for such behaviours.

Participants in this study reported that the university's organisational culture plays a key role in tolerating and indirectly promoting bullying behaviours. When a potential perpetrator observes that bullying is not actioned upon by the organisation, s(he) assumes it to be an acceptable form of behaviour, tolerated at different levels. One academic commented that:

“I think the culture at the university plays a big role in tolerating the bullying behaviour. They don't think about the employee satisfaction. It's not on their agenda.” (Academic staff #8, female)

The above data extract highlighted the role of university's culture in showing tolerance towards bullying behaviours. This perception also led other employees to assume that the university placed less importance on their well-being and job satisfaction. Another academic pointed towards the importance having a proactive organisational culture that does not tolerate bullying:

“I think the organisation has a big influence on the way that bullying is tolerated. Researchers need to have good environments for research. And if you're trying to get people to do quality research you can't have things like bullying upsetting the workplace because you'll actually decrease productivity. In that way, I think there's recognition of a real detriment to acceptance of bullying because it'll actually impact on what they want, which is research output.” (Academic staff #5, female)

Individuals quoted above and other participants, highlighted the importance of having a bullying-free culture in universities, indicating that zero-tolerance towards such behaviour may provide a conducive environment for teaching and research at these institutions. This study found that a conducive environment is needed to produce quality research and bullying behaviours deter researchers from producing their maximum output. As bullying distresses the victims, it may also be implied that it may adversely affect their teaching capabilities as well, which may be detrimental to the quality of higher education delivered to the students.

ROLE OF EMPLOYEES

One of the key internal organisational factors that emerged from the data collected from the academics were the roles of the organisation's employees. Research (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015; Francioli, Conway, et al., 2015) also suggests that an organisation's employees play a significant role in the occurrence of workplace bullying. Participants reported that individual employees, depending upon the role they were in and the way they functioned in that role, influenced the bullying incidences. The roles identified in this study were those of a witness to the behaviour and the alleged perpetrator, as reported below.

WITNESSES

Recent research (e.g. Chen & Park, 2015; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011; Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse, & van Dam, 2016; Paull et al., 2012) indicates that witnesses are often reluctant to intervene when a co-worker is bullied, due to their own fear of being the next victim. A key internal factor that emerged from the interviews with the academic staff was the inaction of co-workers who witnessed their colleagues being bullied.

Participants reported that they did not get any support from their associates, in terms of reporting the behaviour; as others were themselves concerned not to become the perpetrator's next victim, due to their support to the victim. One academic staff member, who had witnessed such situations earlier and later was in a similar situation herself, commented:

“And when I saw the Dean, one of the things I said was that I think that the organisation got away lightly in the last case because no-one wanted to stand up. I said ‘I am standing up now and if nothing is done about it now I am going to take it up’. And I said ‘if that person had gone to the tribunal I’m sure there would have been an issue, so now I’m putting you on notice by saying that this is bullying. If nothing is done about it now, then you’ve already been warned. This is now on record’.” (Academic staff #5, female)

Similar experiences were also reported by other participants. An academic highlighted that, while his co-workers had a sympathetic ear for his situation, none had the courage to stand up against the bullying, indicating the power which the alleged perpetrator had over all of them, as a group:

“I did mention it [bullying] casually to some colleagues, who were very understanding, but there was nothing that they could do to help me, as that power imbalance existed for them as well. The general attitude of my co-workers was ‘you were on your own’ as a university lecturer and you had to fight your own battle.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above data extracts underline the lack of co-workers' support to victims, due to their own concerns about being the next victim of bullying. It also indicated that bullying behaviours may have been checked or stopped if the colleagues, who witnessed the behaviour, had raised their voice against it, but did not do so due to the power the alleged perpetrator had. This depicts how power differentials not only affect the victims, but also influence the response of witnesses. This study found that the silence on the part of the co-workers comes from the fear of adverse consequences that they may face, if they raised their voice against such behaviour.

ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

A recurrent theme that emerged from the interviews with the academic staff was the value that an organisation places on the alleged perpetrator of the bullying behaviour, a view which finds support in literature as well (e.g. Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011; Sidle, 2010). Participants reported that taking action against an alleged perpetrator largely depended upon who was more valuable to the organisation, the perpetrator or the victim. An academic member of staff recounted her experience of being bullied:

“Well, it was stressful when it was happening because I didn't know whether we'd get the support of my boss and the workplace, because I knew that this person was highly regarded and he's written lots of papers ... and I know his value is more than mine because of his status, so then will the organisation back him or will they back me?” (Academic staff #6, female)

Similar experiences were recalled by other participants. Another academic commented:

“I know there certainly were issues where we had one professor who had numerous complaints of bullying against her by fairly high-level academics in the organisation, by professors and senior lecturers and associate professors, and she was able to get away with it because she brought in huge research grants. She continued to be employed because she was bringing in millions and millions of dollars in research grants.” (Academic staff #8, female)

The above quotes highlight the plight of the victims, where they were unsure whether they would be supported by the organisation in case they complained about the alleged perpetrators. This ambiguity over the organisational support stemmed from the perceived value that the organisation placed on the perpetrator, which in most instances as per the findings of this study, was more than that of the victim. This research found that the pre-conceived notion on the victims' part about the greater value placed on the perpetrators prevented them from taking up the issue formally with the organisation as they feared that they were not as valued, and may not be supported by the organisation, in turn, often resulting in the bullying being continued.

PRESSURE TO PERFORM

Shin and Jung (2014), and Dow (2014), observe that workforce across the higher education institutions are faced with workload and performance pressures. Academics reported that they faced an increasing level of teaching and research load with limited resources at disposal to meet the given objectives. This situation, coupled with the intensified competitive environment in higher education sector, may be a triggering factor for bullying to occur. An academic recounted his view on this aspect:

“Certainly the conditions had worsened at the university during my time itself in terms of demands and pressures on the academics. In this way, the workplace culture actually provided for an environment where bullying could take place. I can for sure say that it was less than collegial and egalitarian at the school I was working at the time. You could possibly say that this contributed to it [bullying] as well” (Academic staff #3, male)

While the above extract highlighted the general pressure-filled work culture for academics, a more specific example of how work pressure can lead a line manager to bully a subordinate was given by another academic:

“And something was said to me by this person and I responded with “when you say things like that I feel upset and it distresses me and I wonder if we can talk about it?” And I was told “I don’t have time, I don’t have time, I’m just too busy” – really with that kind of tone. I said “can you just let me know what it is and I can work up a background paper that I can discuss with you?” “I don’t

have time, I told you that!” “Okay” I said “but if you won’t meet me until next week then I will stress about what’s going on. It will affect my teaching”. “I just don’t have time. You’ll just have to come in next week and talk to me.”

(Academic staff #10, female)

The above data extracts signified the increased pressure of performance that academics felt and how such pressure had become embedded in the organisational culture, encouraging some individuals to engage in bullying behaviours. It also pointed out at the apparent lack of collaboration among the academics about supporting those who were bullied. This aspect also encouraged perpetrators of bullying to feel confident to engage in such behaviours, as they presumed that their behaviour would go unreported and unchecked. This study found that excessive pressure of performance rooted in universities’ organisational culture provided favourable grounds for bullying to occur. It may also be contended that high performers are somewhat protected because of their value to the organisation (Omari, Paull, & Crews, 2013), which may also have resulted in the perpetuation of the behaviour.

SYSTEMS

On the technological front, organisational systems in place to run the university can be viewed as machineries on which these institutions function. The participants in this study identified two different aspects of university mechanisms which play a major role in the incidents of bullying. Participants mainly highlighted their lack of trust in the university system and absence of support mechanisms for bullying victims. These aspects have reported below.

LACK OF TRUST IN UNIVERSITY PROCESSES

Consistent with the literature (e.g. Lewis & Rayner, 2003; Ritzman, 2016), it is noted that victims of workplace bullying often do not have trust in the organisational processes or systems in place to redress bullying behaviours. Participating academics in this study who were bullied pointed out at their apparent lack of trust in the university system as a whole to deal workplace bullying and its prevention. Victims reported that they had witnessed others being bullied in the past and the university management did not come forward to help those individuals. Participants who had observed their organisations' failure in the past to act in accordance to anti-bullying policies learnt to distrust its capacity to deal with the behaviour; and therefore lost trust in its set processes. In this regard, one senior academic remarked:

“I don't think that there was any official position [on bullying]. And I did not believe that the system in this university had guts to stand up to her, and so I didn't bother applying. I did not trust the system itself, seeing how unfairly people, who reported bullying in the past, were dealt with.” (Academic staff #7, female)

While some participants noted their past experience of witnessing how ineffective their universities had been in dealing with complains of workplace bullying; they were others who pointed out at how unsupportive the university systems are towards the victim. Echoing such views, an academic stated:

“If somebody says that they are being bullied, there should be a system for them, not the system we have, which just tells you that you think you are being bullied, now go ahead and prove it.” (Academic staff #1, female)

The above statements reflected the opinion of academics who did not pursue a bullying case, as they did not have any confidence in the university’s existing processes around dealing with such behaviours. Some participants also attributed such assumptions to their experience of observing unfair treatment meted out to individuals who brought bullying behaviours to attention. This aspect also points out how university systems tend to be less supportive of the victims; which not only disadvantages these particular individuals, but also reflects on the universities’ indifferent outlook towards the issue of workplace bullying. Bystanders witnessing bullying incidences, where universities did not take corrective actions, may become reluctant to report such behaviour in the future, as they would presume that the institution does not place much importance on it. This research found that academics’ lack of trust in the university’s system prevented them from seeking formal redress in the matter, which ultimately led to bullying behaviours to continue unchecked.

LACK OF SUPPORT MECHANISAMS

Research (e.g. D’Cruz & Noronha, 2010; Pilch & Turska, 2015) found that lack of an effective support mechanism often fuels the continuity of workplace bullying. Academic staff interviewed for this study also highlighted the lack of an effective support system in universities to aid the victims of workplace bullying. Participants underlined that lack of such a system resulted in victims finding themselves being stranded in the face of bullying. One academic observed:

“Because this kind of circumstance occurs quite frequently and the person being bullied is in a fairly powerless position and some kind of support would ensure that things are being done fairly. Hence, there should be a policy made explicit and a support structure around that policy.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above quote not only highlighted the lack of support systems, but also pointed towards the role of power imbalance in the incidence of bullying, as reported earlier in this chapter. An apparent need for an explicit policy against workplace bullying is also indicated at, and has been discussed further in the section on ‘policy’. Similar opinions were also echoed by other participants. An academic remarked:

“And when it comes to dealing with problems like bullying, you are generally on your own. It was not a good situation, as there was not a support network.”
(Academic staff #4, male)

These data extracts signified the lack of a support mechanism for individual victims, which they reported made them feel helpless. Although most universities have designated officers to deal with complaints like bullying, it is not apparent whether these are widely known to the workforce or are easily accessible; as no participant from the academic staff noted their knowledge of it. This study’s findings pointed towards the need for a support system to aid the victims of bullying and to ensure that the situation is dealt with in a just manner. It may be suggested that facilitation of such

a system in the university for the victims may result in individuals feeling more confident when dealing with bullying behaviours.

POLICY

In their research on workplace bullying, Hurley et al. (2016) point towards the role that organisations' anti-bullying policies play in ameliorating the occurrence of the behaviour. Participants in this research also reported the lack of implementation of anti-bullying policies and even the complete absence of any policies as being one of the major factors which led to the prevalence of bullying behaviours. It was also reported that universities do not make active efforts to spread awareness among the workforce about any policies, even if there was one. This is evident from the following statement by an academic member of staff:

“As far I knew, there was not any exclusive policy that was written. I spoke to someone in the association too, and they were prepared to help, but there was not an explicit policy on bullying. Even if there was a policy, no one seemed to be aware of it. This just shows how little importance it may have for the University. In a way, you may say that, by not explicitly condemning bullying in general, the university may appear to be implicitly condoning it.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above data extract not only indicated the need for a strong anti-bullying policy, it also pointed towards the need to effectively communicate such a policy to the workforce. Such non-communication of policies conveyed to the workforce that the

universities implicitly tolerated such behaviour. Similar views were shared by another senior academic staff who observed:

“I must say that your interview has alerted me that when it comes to policy matters on things like bullying, there needs to be a very explicit policy, which ideally should be worked out by the people in the workplace. That was missing and I think it could have been a big help to me and the others.” (Academic staff #2, male)

The above statements not only signified the absence of anti-bullying policies in universities, they also pointed towards the apparent lack of importance that the university places on workplace bullying. These findings also pointed towards a direct need to have clear and explicit anti-bullying policies in place at universities to prevent the initial occurrence of the behaviour. This study found that universities need to have a well-defined policy to prevent bullying and must appropriate steps to ensure that the workforce is made aware of such policies which would help in ultimately ameliorating this behaviour.

4.2.3 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

One key theme that emerged from the interviews was the array of individual factors that drove bullying behaviours in Australian academia. Participants in this study attributed these factors to have influenced the incidence and continuation of bullying behaviours among academic staff. Findings relating to the relevant subthemes are summarised in the figure below (Figure 19) and detailed thereafter.

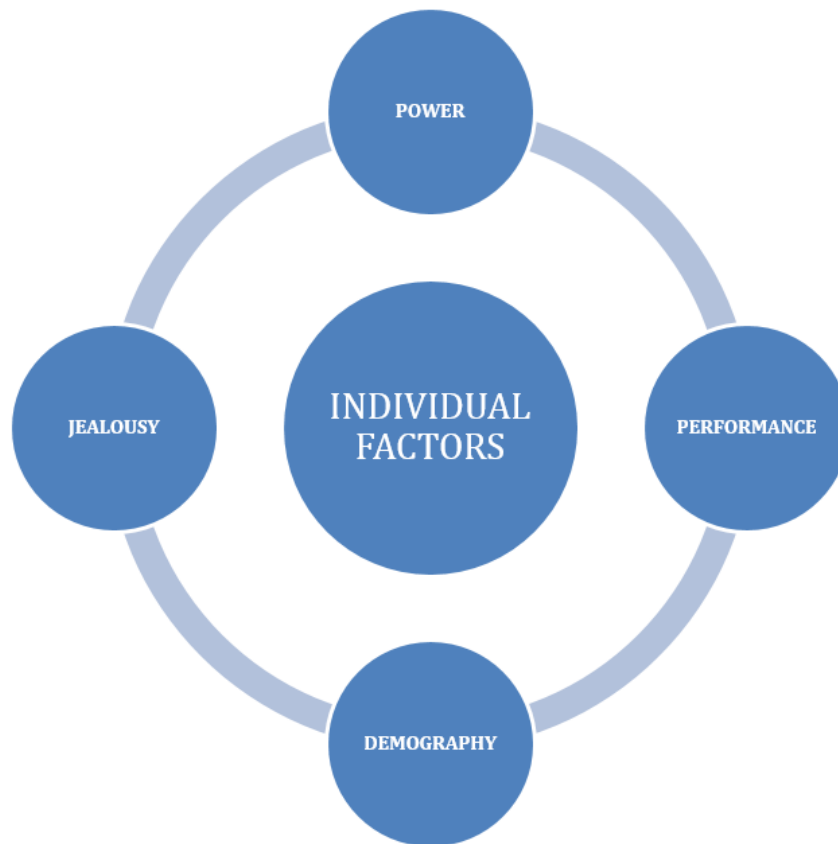


Figure 19: Individual factors influencing workplace bullying in Australian academia

POWER

Recent literature (e.g. Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; McKay, 2014) has consistently identified power to be one of the major underlying factor which enables the occurrence of workplace bullying. A recurrent theme that emerged from the interviews was the notion of power imbalances. Individuals participating in this study were of the opinion that power differentials between the alleged perpetrators and the victims created conditions which were conducive for bullying to occur. The power

imbalance also discouraged the victim from taking any formal steps to stop the bullying behaviour. An academic staff member recounted his experience:

“You know when people get bullied and others just say that why you don’t confront her, just stand your ground or complain, that’s just rubbish. First of all, there is so much power imbalance. In the given circumstances, if I stood up, I did not think that I would win. Not only that I would not win, I had too much to lose. So professionally, personally and financially, I had too much to lose.”
(Academic staff #2, male)

Besides highlighting the element of power imbalance, the above quote also suggests possible long-term professional and financial damage which could stem from such power differentials. While loss of reputation in the workplace could result in professional damage for the victim, financial damage could amount to detrimental effects on the victim’s employment. Other participants making similar observations included comments by an academic, who stated:

“There was power imbalance, absolutely, yes, because I needed the money and the job and she was the one that had the power to take it away.” (Academic staff #9, female)

It was found that power differentials not only deterred victims from seeking redress, but also led others who witnessed such behaviours, to remain mute bystanders. Some

participants in this study reported similar inaction by co-workers witnessing bullying due to the power the alleged perpetrator had over them as a team. Peer support in these instances was limited to only sympathy and understanding for the victims. One academic remarked:

“I knew no one at work was going to support me. They all knew how powerful he [alleged perpetrator] was and didn’t want to become his next target.”
(Academic staff #4, male)

The above evidence not only signified the relevance of power imbalance in bullying situations, it also highlighted the nature of such power. Individuals reported that this power stems from the perpetrator’s formal authority to alter or stall career progression and the employment prospects of the individual. This study also found the fear of personal and economic ramifications to be one of the key reasons why individuals decided not to pursue bullying complaints formally; pointing towards possible victimisation, as reported earlier in this chapter, which may stem from the power differential.

PERFORMANCE

General consensus exists over the influence of performance on the incidence of workplace bullying (e.g. Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; Keashly & Nowell, 2003; Salin, 2003). Most research participants in this study also identified performance as being one of the key individual factors which influenced bullying behaviours. At times, the victim’s good performance was viewed as being a triggering for bullying to

occur in the first place as the alleged perpetrator felt threatened by such performance.

An academic commented:

“I think that he may have felt threatened because I’m very sort of flexible in my research style [sic] and I was introducing new things into our work environment that may be he wasn't comfortable with because he likes to think that he’s the boss with all the ideas.” (Academic staff #6, female)

Similar views were also echoed by other participants, who noted alleged perpetrators feeling threatened by the victim’s superior performance. Another academic remarked:

“I think that the person that was put in above me, the fulltime staff member actually felt threatened that my teaching evaluations were very good.”
(Academic staff #9, female)

Some of the other participants were, however, more specific in their contentions, observing that their progression in the workplace made the alleged perpetrators feel insecure as well as threatened. One academic contended:

“At that time, I was also being kind of trained by her manager [sic], for moving up the ladder and probably that upset her. I think that’s what prompted the situation.” (Academic staff #4, male)

Study findings here indicate that in an academic environment, performance-related factors seen as triggers for workplace bullying include different styles of work, better performance and future progression. All these factors may have led the alleged perpetrator(s) to feel insecure in their own professional positions. In such instances, it may be contended that bullying was viewed as a defensive measure to secure one's own place. This aspect of feeling threatened due to others' performance may also indicate that alleged perpetrators were set in in their ways of doing things; and felt threatened when another individual came up with new ideas or ways, that was different from theirs.

DEMOGRAPHY

Participants in this study acknowledged demography as a major factor, influencing the prevalence of workplace bullying in Australian academia; this also aligns with the literature (e.g. Hollis, 2014; Salin, 2015; Salin & Hoel, 2013) reviewed for this study. An individual's cultural background was a major demographic factor highlighted by the academics participating in this study as reported below.

INDIVIDUALS' CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Researchers (e.g. Jacobson, Hood, & Buren III, 2014; Omari & Sharma, 2016; Yokoyama et al., 2016) widely acknowledge the influence of an individual's cultural background on workplace bullying. The cultural background of both the alleged perpetrator and the victim was identified by the research participants as being a factor influencing bullying behaviours. For instance, the significance of differences in cultural backgrounds of the individuals was highlighted by an Australian academic, who reported:

“It’s interesting when you talk about culture because the guy was an American, while I am Australian. You don’t want to stereotype but you know, loud, abrasive, assertive. I have nothing to go on why he treated me the way he did, other than to think that somehow he believed he could, and of course he got away with it.” (Academic staff #8, female)

Comments on similar lines were also made other academics. Another Australian academic provided a more vivid description:

“He [alleged perpetrator] is from England, he’s also been in North America, which is also class-based, but in Australia, it’s not so. The Australian system is a little bit more egalitarian. So even if a person is above you, you can still have the right to speak out. And so he’s new here, so I don’t know whether he understood that balance. And the fact that even if you’re lower [sic], you’re not scared to speak.” (Academic staff #6, female)

In the above instance, the alleged perpetrator comes from the United Kingdom (UK), which the participant regards as a class-based culture. In accordance with this study’s theoretical framework, analysis of data collected on culture was in line with the typology of organisational culture by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). Analysis based on the above, indicated that British culture is a task oriented and decentralised ‘guided missile culture’. In the task-oriented nature of these cultures,

people are supposed to progress a particular task in a set way in a project-oriented work environment.

By contrast, Australia primarily falls under the 'Eiffel tower culture', which is more role-oriented than task-oriented despite being hierarchy-based. In this type of culture, an individual in a particular role feels more confident about raising issues with the seniors, as it would be seen as a part of the role they are in rather than an encroachment in the set way of doing things. This interplay of individuals' cultural backgrounds, suggest that behaviours may be perceived as bullying, based on how they are viewed by different individuals, based on their own cultural orientations.

JEALOUSY

Wang and Sung (2016, p. 118) define jealousy as the "recognition of one's own unfavourable status in comparing oneself with a rival who possesses superior quality, achievement, or other assets that one wishes the rival lacks." Researchers (e.g. Koh, 2016; Perminiene, Kern, & Perminas, 2016; Weuve, Pitney, Martin, & Mazerolle, 2014) identified jealousy as one of the underlying factors that influence and trigger bullying behaviours. The element of jealousy also emerged in this study as one of the reasons, which the participants identified was behind the bullying behaviour being initiated. Academic staff interviewed for this study observed that the perpetrators of bullying felt jealous of them and the reasons for this could be best known to the perpetrators. One academic remarked:

"I think that people bully you because they want to hurt, as they cannot be something like you [sic]. So, I put it in the frame of jealousy. So, this is my

perception of bullying as I always wondered that why did they bully me, when I did no harm to them.” (Academic staff #1, female)

While some participants did not specify any particular reason for the behaviour, there were others who were more precise in their contention. A senior academic commented:

“I think a lot of it [bullying] stemmed from jealousy, jealousy that other people had good students who would give them publications and things like that.”
(Academic staff #5, female)

The above data extracts pointed towards the professional reasons behind the alleged perpetrator’s jealousy. In light of the current “publish or perish” situation in the higher education sector (Wilson, Sharrad, Rasmussen, & Kernick, 2013, p. 210), it may be contended that prevailing competitive settings might result in workers becoming jealous of each other (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Professional jealousy can also stem from the alleged perpetrator feeling threatened by the better performance of the victim. While in some instances, the participants were able to identify the apparent reasons behind this jealousy; there were other instances, wherein jealousy was identified to be behind the bullying behaviour, but the victims could not figure out the reason behind this jealousy. Taking a holistic view, this study found that jealousy was cited as one of the key motivating factors behind the bullying behaviour amongst the academics, which may be also linked to the prevailing competitive environment in the sector; explored further in this chapter.

4.2.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - RESEARCH QUESTION #2

The second research question explored the different factors that influenced the occurrence of workplace bullying in Australian academia. These factors were classified as organisational external and internal factors, along with the individual factors. Noting the overarching influence of NPM in the higher education sector (Favaloro, 2015), this study reported competition, economic factors and societal factors external to the organisation to have influenced bullying. Organisational internal factors found in this study were categorised as structure (Hollis, 2015), culture (Pilch & Turska, 2015), systems and policy (Hurley et al., 2016). Power (Berlingieri, 2015), performance (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015) and individual's cultural background (Jacobson et al., 2014; Omari & Sharma, 2016) were the major individual factors identified in this study that influenced bullying amongst the academic staff.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION #3: CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING

The third research question was aimed at exploring the consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia. Research (e.g. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011a; Hurley et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014) has consistently demonstrated the widespread consequences that workplace bullying can have for individuals (Hogh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2011), organisations (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010) and the society as a whole (Omari, 2007). The thematic analysis of data collected from academic staff members brought forward certain themes of consequences that both, the individuals and the organisations, suffered due to workplace bullying. The consequences reported by this study's participants were classified into individual,

work and organisational consequences, as depicted in the following figure (Figure 20) and reported thereafter.

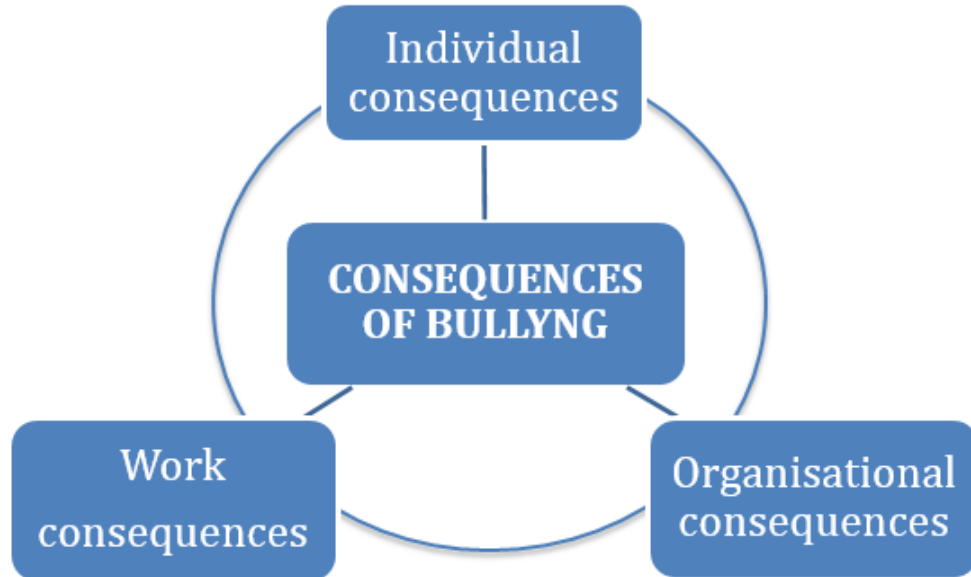


Figure 20: Summary of findings relating to Research Question #3 for academic staff

4.3.1 INDIVIDUAL CONSEQUENCES

Workplace bullying significantly impacts individuals who either suffer or witness such behaviour (Spence Laschinger & Nosko, 2015). The academic members of staff who participated in this study reported to have suffered from a number of consequences at an individual level due to the bullying behaviour. The major sub themes that emerged in this category are illustrated in the figure below (Figure 21) and explored as under.

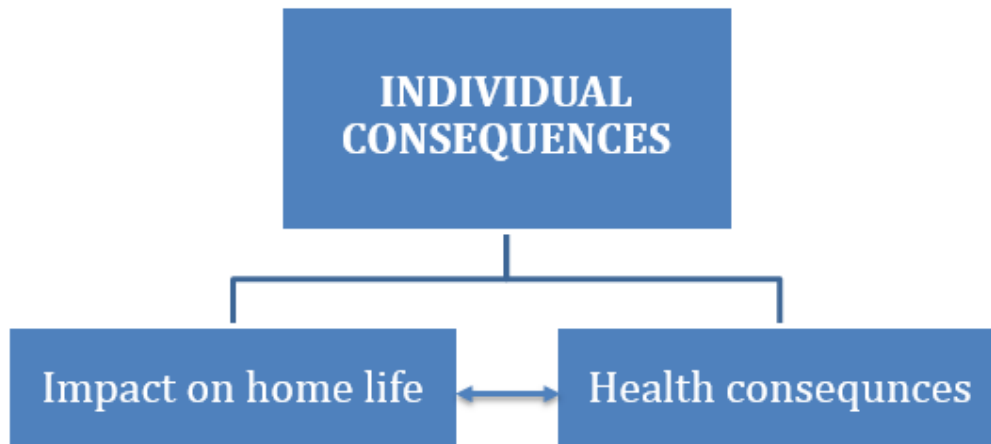


Figure 21: Individual consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia

IMPACT ON HOME LIFE

While Shin and Jung (2014) contend that workplace bullying has a negative impact on the quality of home life for the affected individuals, Kakarika, González-Gómez, and Dimitriadis (2017) label such impact as a spill-over impact of bullying, highlighting its adverse implications. Consistent with the literature (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011), the majority of participants in this study also reported that bullying behaviour had adverse implications on their family life, also disturbing their work-life balance. It was reported that bullied individuals carried the stress caused due to the behaviour with them from work to home, making their family life strained. Therefore, bullying not only troubled them when they were at work, but also at home; leaving no safe place for the victims. Echoing this aspect succinctly, one senior academic remarked:

“The emotional consequences at home, I was just horrible. My husband and my children suffered.” (Academic staff #9, female)

This study found that bullying victims, due being stressed, passively strained their families; depicting how workplace bullying can have negative implication for the members of the community. While a number of participants reported bullying to have negatively affected their personal life, a few participants also appreciated the support they got from their partners. Highlighting this aspect, an academic contended:

“Fortunately I had a very good wife, still have a very good wife, who gave me very good support at that time. I could talk to her about it as she’s a very strong person.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The individuals quoted above highlighted the situations faced by a majority of academics who suffered bullying behaviours at work. This study found that bullying does not just affect the individual towards whom it is directed, but also actively or passively affects all others who are closely associated with the individual, chiefly the family. Participants in this study depicted how they tend to carry the stress caused due to bullying at work to their families, eventually affecting their partners and children; this was in line with the observations made by Kwan, Tuckey, and Dollard (2016).

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Another important theme that emerged from the interviews with the academic staff was the range of negative health consequences faced by the individual victims.

Aligning with the literature (e.g. Han & Ha, 2016), the consequences reported were classified into psychological and physical consequences. These are explained as below.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

In agreement with the literature reviewed for this study (e.g. Nielsen, Mageroy, Gjerstad, & Einarsen, 2014), psychological consequences among the victims due to workplace bullying was another significant theme that emerged from the interviews conducted with the academic staff. Loss of self-confidence and esteem, emotional disturbance and stress were the most reported psychological consequences of workplace bullying on the academics, consistent with the findings of LaSala, Wilson, and Sprunk (2016). It was found that loss of self-confidence and self-esteem was the most commonly experienced psychological consequence that workplace bullying had on academic staff. One academic reported:

“In my case I ended up resigning from the organisation. It [bullying] impacted on my self-confidence, it impacted on my self-esteem, I felt undermined, and ultimately I walked away from a position that I really loved, but I just felt that I couldn’t keep working under those conditions.” (Academic staff #8, female)

The individual quoted above signified the level of deep psychological impact that bullying at the workplace had on the individual victim. It was noted that the behaviour was so intense that, though being a senior staff member, it made the victim compelled to leave the job that she was passionate about. Leaving the job due to being unable to

cope up with the psychological consequences of bullying, was a common step that a majority of academic participants in this study reported to have taken. This study also found that this loss of self-confidence and self-esteem not only affected the current working capacity of the individuals, but it also marred their capacity to confidently seek jobs in the future, as result of the self-doubt created by the past bullying experience.

A positive consequence which emerged from the data collected from academic staff was the inspiration that some individuals derived from the bullying experience to be stronger in their own selves in the future; a view supported by other scholars as well (e.g. Maidaniuc-Chirilă, 2015). A few participants reported that even though they were gravely affected by the bullying behaviour at the time it happened, they realised that the experience had actually transformed them into tougher individuals. It was reported that the experience also made them feel empowered enough to deal with bullying, should such behaviours occur in the future again. An academic commented:

“I think it [bullying] also made me stronger. It made me think about other people, so at times when I see something happening I might speak up.” (Academic staff #9, female)

Similar views were also echoed by a few other academics. An academic shared his opinion in relation to this:

“While it [bullying] hurt me to have been subjected to this at that time, it also prompted me to be stronger as an individual, to be more proactive and open, so that I don’t allow anybody else to behave with me like this in the future. So, you can say the bullying behaviour, subsequently made me a stronger person as opposed to being beaten by it.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above quotes are representative of the opinion expressed by the majority of academic staff members interviewed for this study. A significant aspect indicated was the pro-activeness on the part of the individual victims to identify bullying in the future, not only for themselves but also when such behaviours would be directed at others. This study found that bullying experiences not only resulted in stronger individuals, who are better armed to deal with such behaviours directed at them in the future; but also made them a proactive bystander who, when witness such behaviour meted to others in the future, would stand up against it.

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

A majority of participants reported to have suffered from a range of physical health conditions due to their suffering of bullying at work in line with the findings of O'Driscoll et al. (2016). The most commonly reported health consequences were sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, physical anxiety and general illness. Most participants seemed to have suffered from multiple consequences at the same time. Sleep disturbance was, however, found to be the most recurring physical consequence that bullying had on the individual. One academic reported that:

“I lost a lot of sleep, like I would wake up at three o’clock in the morning worrying about how to deal with it.” (Academic staff #10, female)

Similar experiences were recalled by other participants as well. An academic contended:

“I went to a doctor and explained my situation. He told me to raise this formally and meanwhile, he gave me some medicines for controlling my stress and anxiety. I could not sleep, I was shaking all the time.” (Academic staff #2, male)

Sleep disturbances may also have a negative impact on the victim’s psychological health (Magee et al., 2015) as discussed earlier in this chapter. A few participants also reported witnessing their co-workers being bullied and highlighted how such behaviour had negatively impacted the victims’ physical health. An academic observed:

“I can see how other people really have their careers significantly impacted because of these kinds of behaviours, almost to the point where they get physically ill.” (Academic staff #8, female)

The above quotes demonstrated the extent to which bullying behaviours physically affected the victim’s health and wellbeing. While some participants reported to have taken medication to redress adverse health consequences, as indicated above, there were others who admitted to have endured a feeling of helplessness, due to the various

individual and organisational factors at play; as reported earlier in this chapter. This study found that the severity of physical health consequences depended upon the level of effect that the bullying behaviour had on the particular victim, and varied from an individual to individual.

4.3.2 WORK CONSEQUENCES

Research (e.g. Park & Ono, 2016) has consistently shown that workplace bullying has negative work consequences. Individuals interviewed for this study also reported that bullying had adversely affected their work performance in terms of their active engagement with the work assigned and their productivity as illustrated in the figure below (Figure 22). While productivity is often considered to be an attribute of the organisation, several of the interviewees commented on the reduction in individual productivity as a result of bullying.

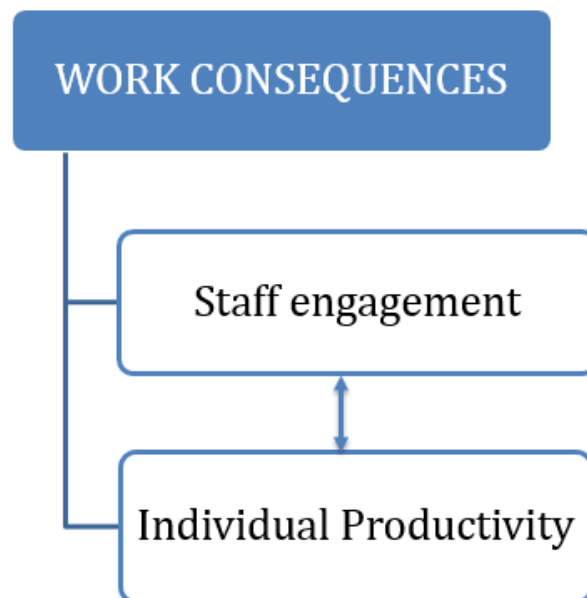


Figure 22: Work consequences of bullying in Australian academia

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

A recurring theme in the data collected from academic members of staff, was their loss of interest in work due to the bullying behaviour resulting in lower levels of staff engagement. Participants observed that their continuous suffering of bullying behaviour made them less inclined towards the work they were usually passionate about which also had an adverse effect on their productivity. One academic contended:

“I did not want to come to work and when I did, I just shut the door. And to say the least, I no longer enjoyed my work.” (Academic staff #2, male)

Similar comments were also made by other academics. Another academic succinctly highlighted this aspect:

“I hated coming to work. It was just not a very happy period.” (Academic staff #4, male)

The decrease in staff engagement may also be linked to the level of psychological as well as physical stress experienced by the victims, as a result of being bullied. It may be contended that bullying not only adversely affects the level of staff engagement, but also the workplace productivity, as discussed next in the chapter.

INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTIVITY

As observed by Samnani and Singh (2014) bullied workers may not be able to contribute their best to the workplace. Participants in this study observed that bullying had a negative impact, not only on the victims' productivity, but also of the bystanders

who witnessed the behaviour. Underlining this aspect, an academic concisely commented:

“You can’t have things like bullying upsetting the workplace because you’ll actually decrease productivity.” (Academic staff #5, female)

Such loss of productivity may be linked to individuals’ reluctance to coming to work itself. While most academics highlighted their feeling of a general dread coming to work, a few participants admitted to have particularly avoided the alleged perpetrator by not coming to work. A member of academic staff commented:

“But it [workplace bullying] made coming to work very difficult, as I did not want to see that person or her manager.” (Academic staff #3, male)

The above quotes not only highlighted the lower levels of individuals’ staff engagement, but also indicated a level of self-exclusion due to the bullying behaviour. Participants reported that their loss of interest at work made them less interactive, not only with the alleged perpetrator, but with others at work, which also lowered the level of staff engagement for the bystanders. The loss of interest in work reported by this study’s participants potentially indicates that disinterested employees may do the minimal job duties required of their profiles, but may not go above and beyond or take self-initiative. This study found that bullying resulted in an overall loss of productivity, on the part of the victims, as they limited their professional dealings with their co-workers, which had an adverse effect on their performance and outputs.

4.3.3 ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Research (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011a; Hurley et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014) has established the widespread consequences of workplace bullying for the organisation as a whole. Although participants directly did not report the consequences for the organisation, certain organisational consequences, were, however, apparent from the data collected, as participants had indirectly pointed towards these in their interviews. It may be suggested that the participants were so focussed on describing the issue from their own point of view, that they did not find it important to reflect on it from the organisation's perspective. Another possible reason for this omission could be that participants were so profoundly affected by the bullying experience and the organisation's inaction to redress it, that they did not feel like concentrating on the potential organisational costs. As most of the data extracts for these consequences have already been quoted earlier in this chapter, this section reports on these inferred consequences observed from the interviews conducted. In line with the framework of consequences due to workplace bullying by Bartlett and Bartlett (2011), highlighted in chapter two; these inter-related consequences were classified as absenteeism, turnover, productivity and reputation, as illustrated in the figure below (Figure 23).



Figure 23: Organisational consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia

Absenteeism: A consensus exists among researchers (e.g. Francioli, Høgh, et al., 2015; Neall & Tuckey, 2014) that workplace bullying often results in increased levels of absenteeism in organisations. Academics interviewed for this study also admitted to have sought ways and occasions to be absent from work, in order to avoid interactions with the alleged perpetrator. It was found that most academics disguised their leave due to the stress of being bullied in other forms of formal absence, mainly sick leave and annual leave. Nonetheless, this study found that workplace bullying resulted in affected individuals being inclined to be absent from work; subsequently increasing absenteeism in the higher education institutions.

Turnover: As suggested in the literature reviewed (e.g. Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2016; Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014) for this

study, unchecked workplace bullying results in victims leaving the organisations, inevitably increasing turnover. A number of academics participating in this study reported to have left their academic jobs as a result of being bullied. Such steps were taken by those individuals who did not have any hope that the behaviour would be redressed at the organisational level, pointing towards a lack of trust in organisational policies and systems, as reported earlier in this chapter. Such loss of academic staff due to being bullied resulted in increased employee turnover for the universities. Subsequently, it may be inferred that a higher turnover of staff may also have resulted in increased cost of recruitment of replacement staff and their training. It may also be noted that new staff may not be as immediately productive as existing staff, which may result in a loss of productivity and reputation. These aspects are discussed next in this chapter.

Productivity: Scholars (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Einarsen et al., 2016) contend that workplace bullying leads to a decrease in the organisations' overall productivity, as the victims are not able to contribute their best towards fulfilling the organisational objectives. Academic participants in this study also indicated towards a fall in their productivity due to being bullied. Also, in view of the existing sectoral conditions reported earlier, it was found that most academics continued to work in the same institutions, in spite of being bullied; although they were not able to contribute fully to their jobs due to the behaviour they were subjected to. This ultimately led to a decrease in these higher education institutions' overall productivity, and work unit in terms of the teaching and research outputs.

Reputation: Scholars (e.g. Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Neall & Tuckey, 2014) have long contended that organisations need to take steps to ameliorate workplace bullying, as it implicitly damages the organisation's image in the wider community. Similar contentions were also made during the interviews with the academic staff. While most of academics highlighted how the universities' image could be damaged by the public exposure of the bullying behaviours at the institutions, some participants in this study also reported to have shared their bullying experience with their other family members. This may have resulted in a tarnished image of the university not only in the eyes of these family members, but also in the eye of other members of public, among whom these family members would have spread the negative sentiment about the institution.

4.3.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - RESEARCH QUESTION #3

The third research question explored the various consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia. The consequences reported by participants were categorised as individual, work and organisational consequences. Under the individual consequences, the negative effects on the victims' psychological and physical health due to workplace bullying were reported. As a work consequence, participants in the study accredited workplace bullying to have adversely impacted their staff engagement and productivity. Although, participating academics did not directly report any organisational consequences, the researcher was able to interpret some adverse consequences for the higher education institutions which could be inferred from the interviews conducted with the academic staff. This study's findings suggest that many of the consequences were actually inter-related and not stand alone. For instance, individual consequences related to work may have ultimately resulted in consequences for the whole organisation. It may also be worth mentioning that most academics were generally bullied by other academics. As reported in the next chapter,

professional staff reported to be bullied by other professional staff as well as academics. This indicates towards a two tiered workforce in the higher education sector, as also observed by Adewale and Elumah (2015), where one group might be more prone to negative workplace behaviours, like bullying.

This chapter discussed the various findings from the academic staff in the context of the study's research questions. Themes were coded and analysed in accordance with this study's theoretical framework. The findings for first question focussed on the nature of workplace bullying and identified those behaviours that were classed as bullying. The findings for second research question explored the factors which influenced bullying and categorised these into organisational external and internal factors, as well as individual factors; all in line with this study's theoretical framework. The reported consequences of bullying behaviour were explored in the third question. These consequences were classified into individual, work and organisational consequences. Some of the findings relating to workplace bullying matched with the aspects stated in the literature review, while they were a few, which differed from it. These are deliberated further in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS - PROFESSIONAL STAFF

This chapter focuses on reporting the findings from the professional staff on their experiences of being bullied in the Australian higher education sector. The chapter presents the findings based on this study's three research questions which explore the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in this sector. Data have been analysed and the resultant findings have been reported in accordance with this study's theoretical framework, as highlighted in chapter two. The findings have been evidenced by relevant extracts from the data collected for this study.

This chapter reports the findings on workplace bullying from the university professional staff. Data was gathered from thirty-one professional staff from across Western Australia's four public universities. Out of the thirty one participants, six were male and twenty five were female professional staff (Figure 24). Throughout this chapter, the term participant is used to refer only to the professional staff interviewed for this study.

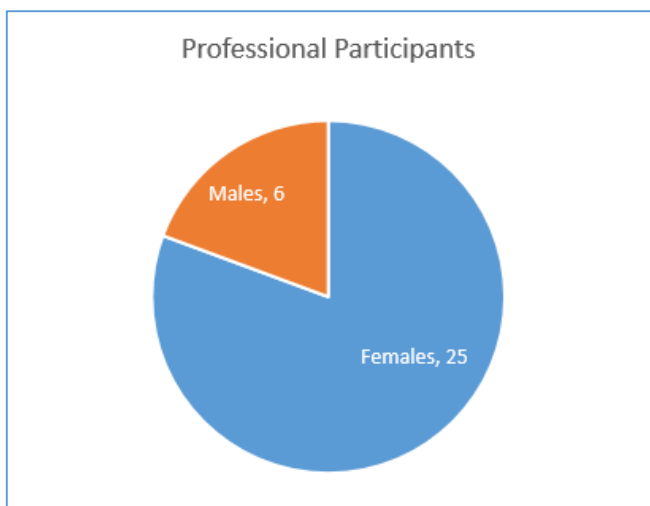


Figure 24: Professional staff participants in this study

This chapter presents findings supported by data extracts for each of the study's three research questions:

- How do employees in Australian academia experience bullying?
- How are the bullying behaviours driven by various forces in Australian academia?
- What are the consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia?

5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION #1: THE NATURE OF BULLYING

The first research question explored the nature of bullying, highlighting the different forms it takes in Australian higher education sector. This study's framework (Figure 8 in chapter two) identified the need for describing the nature of workplace bullying and the behaviours that constitute it. The figure below (Figure 25) depicts the findings in this area from the professional staff, which are reported further in this section.

Research Question 1:
How do employees in Australian academia experience workplace bullying?

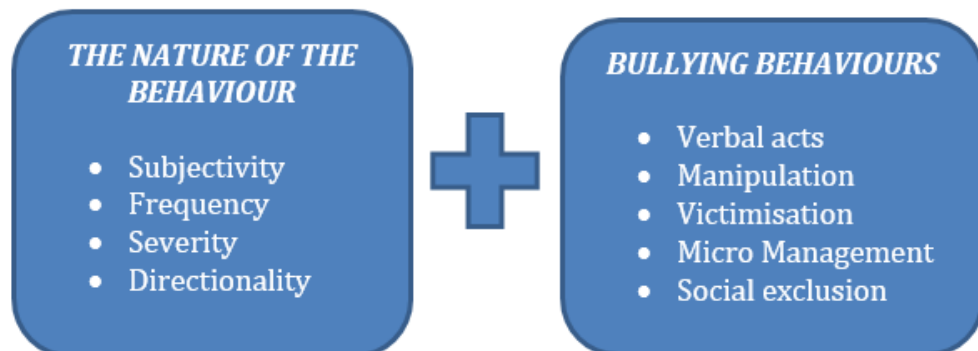


Figure 105: Summary of findings relating to Research Question #1 for professional staff

As outlined above, two distinct themes emerged under this research question. The first was the nature of bullying itself, as reported by the participants, and the second was those behaviours which participants labelled as bullying. As illustrated in the Figure 25 above, different sub-themes were identified in these themes, which are individually reported below.

5.1.1 THE NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOUR

The first theme that emerged from the interviews was the way in which professional staff in academia described the nature of workplace bullying. The specific attributes identified by the professional staff are subjectivity, frequency, severity and directionality; each of these are reported below. In line with recent research (e.g. De Vos & Kirsten, 2015; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Elliott & Harris, 2012; Ryan, 2016), this study also found the nature of workplace bullying to be multifaceted, with different layers to the behaviour, as explored below.

SUBJECTIVITY

Researchers (e.g. Gaffney, DreMarco, Hofmeyer, Vessey, & Budin, 2012; Nielsen & Knardahl, 2015; Samnani, 2013) view workplace bullying to be a subjective behaviour, the perception of which differs from one individual to another. In concurrence with the reported views of the participating academics in this study, the professional staff also highlighted the element of subjectivity in workplace bullying. Participants underlined the role of intention and also outlined bullying as being difficult to prove; each of these aspects are elaborated below.

ROLE OF INTENTION

Consistent with recent research in the field (e.g. Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2011; Giorgi, 2010; Rooyen & McCormack, 2013), a common theme that emerged from the interviews conducted with the professional staff members was the role that an individual's intention played in defining particular behaviours as bullying. Participants unanimously agreed that, regardless of the stated intentions of the alleged perpetrators, the way in which the victims viewed the behaviour should be the sole factor which determines the behaviour as bullying. This finding is in line with recent research (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Park & Ono, 2016) which also lays emphasis on the role of intention in bullying behaviours. A manager in a university simply stated:

“I think that if you feel it is bullying, then it is bullying.” (Professional staff #17, male)

Other participants in this study were much more specific in their responses. One professional staff member commented:

“If I think you're bullying me, it doesn't matter if your intention was to bully or not to bully, I am getting affected. That's logical as well because you're just doing your job naturally but then you may need to make amends on that, so that others don't feel troubled.” (Professional staff #24, female)

This individual highlighted a need for action to protect other workers from being harmed by bullying that may be a part of a person's routine workplace behaviour. Some participants, who witnessed others being bullied, also made similar remarks. These responses suggest that such views were not only held by the victims themselves, but also others who observed the behaviour. One senior manager in a university commented:

“I do believe it was absolutely bullying because I think that is how she certainly perceived it.” (Professional staff #27, male)

While highlighting the importance of individual perceptions, these quotes also underline why participants place so much importance on their own perception of the bullying behaviour. It was reported that in the victim's view, the alleged perpetrator's intention was not significant. This study also found that individual's perception of viewing particular behaviours as bullying was determined by the level of impact that such behaviour had on the individual. While most of the literature does not explicitly underline the role of intention, some scholars (e.g. Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Pilch & Turska, 2015) highlight how individuals, based on their own perception, may label certain behaviours as bullying; an aspect explored further in this chapter.

DIFFICULT TO PROVE

Being a subjective behaviour dependent upon individuals' perception, victims often find workplace bullying difficult to prove. This aspect is widely supported in the literature (e.g. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Gaffney et al., 2012). The

difficult to prove nature of bullying was also one of the recurrent themes in the data gathered from the professional staff. A majority of participants in this research stated that they felt they were being bullied, but found it difficult to pinpoint and prove the behaviour as bullying; a professional staff member commented:

“If I make her work very hard so she leaves, then that the bullying [sic] but it is hard to prove. I feel like because it is so hard to prove, there is not much attention or like focus on it as it could be within the university, and so I did not complain.”

(Professional staff #30, female)

The quote above highlights the difficulty that individuals face in proving particular behaviours as bullying. Universities may be seen as placing less importance on curtailing workplace bullying; an aspect which has been reported further in this chapter. Some participants contended that the subtle nature of workplace bullying made it difficult for them to prove it, like the professional staff quoted below:

As I said, a lot of the things were more subtle. Yeah, it's difficult to categorise and prove it [workplace bullying] basically. (Professional staff #17, male)

The difficulty in proving bullying also deterred individuals from moving forward to formally protest against this behaviour. This study's respondents were of the opinion that higher education institutions do not place enough importance on workplace

bullying due to the difficulty involved in pin-pointing the behaviour, which further makes it difficult to redress. These aspects have been described further in this chapter.

FREQUENCY

Frequency of the behaviour, whether ongoing or a singular incident, was one of the aspects identified by the professional staff to label a behaviour as bullying. Researchers (e.g. Branch & Murray, 2015; Devonish, 2013) have viewed workplace bullying as an ongoing behaviour. Most of the participants in this study likewise stated that the ongoing nature of the behaviour was one of the primary reasons which led them define it as bullying. While some participants chose to simply state that the bullying was ongoing, others explicitly stated the time duration for which the behaviour continued. One senior manager reported the approximate length of time for which the bullying went on:

“I was bullied in the workplace and it was ongoing, it was repeated. Um, pretty much every day for an extended period of time. So for about, I think, it was about 8 to 12 months.” (Professional staff #4, female)

The individual quoted above not only stated the approximate length of time for which the behaviour continued, but also reiterated that continuity was one of the factors that led her to define the behaviour as bullying. Other participants, who also reported the behaviours as continuous, did not specify a particular length of time. Another participant highlighted the ongoing nature of workplace bullying:

“I think what made me feel like it was bullying was that it was an ongoing occurrence so it’s not something that happens once, it’s something that happens every single day of every week for a couple of months so that ... for the recurring behaviour.” (Professional staff #6, female)

Along with stating the behaviour’s continuity, this extract also reinforced that it was the ongoing nature of the behaviour, which prompted the participant to define it as bullying. Echoing similar views, the majority of participants in this study reported that it was the ongoing nature of the behaviour that compelled them to label it as bullying. This signified the importance that participants laid on the continuity of a behaviour, in order to describe it as bullying.

SEVERITY

While the majority of participants identified bullying as an ongoing behaviour, some participants in this research also categorised a singular incident as bullying, owing to its severity. While most of the literature does not acknowledge this stance, this aspect is consistent with the views of some scholars (e.g. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Chan-Mok, Caponecchia, & Winder, 2014; Florriann & Seibel, 2016; Lee, 2000; Omari, 2007; Thomas, 2010), who also describe singular incidents as workplace bullying, based on the severe impact such incidents have on the victims. Participants in this study likewise highlighted the severity of impact that these singular incidents of bullying had on them. One senior professional staff member recounted her experience:

“It was a single incident. Actually the person was an academic and it was actually his behaviour that was known to everyone. Therefore I think that people tolerated his comments via email, as he was senior. It was via email, um, very impolitely [sic] to me and my leading the team you know. For me that is a type of bullying.” (Professional staff #23, female)

The participant quoted above not only highlights single incidents as bullying, but also indicates the way in which academic staff members, based on their seniority, engage in such behaviours with professional staff at their universities. In the above instance, the participant observes that alleged perpetrator was prone to behave in this fashion, as he knew others would tolerate it due to his academic position, indicating a power imbalance. The influence of power in workplace bullying scenarios has been discussed further in the section on individual factors. The respondent quoted above may have experienced the behaviour for first time, but it appeared that the alleged perpetrator was used to behaving in the same manner with others, as admitted by the victim herself, indicating that bullying others may be a part of the alleged perpetrator’s routine behaviour. Another professional staff commented:

“It [workplace bullying] just happened once. It was more of abusing the fact that he was an academic and could behave the way he wants with me [sic]. He treated me like I was nothing, which made me feel very low at that time. That was really the whole incident.” (Professional staff #19, female)

Power imbalance as well as a significant divide between the standing of academic and professional staff is also evident from the above; aspects which have been covered further in this chapter. Echoing similar views, another professional staff member reported:

“A single incident can be bullying as well. I don’t think bullying has to be continuous. If it is harsh enough to impact on someone’s work and taking a big you know, dive in like that, yes, I think it is bullying.” (Professional staff #21, female)

The data extract above may suggest that bullying may also be single incidents which are severe in nature and have a negative and wide reaching impact on an individual’s professional standing at the workplace. Other participants also highlighted how they labelled singular incidents as bullying, based on the effect the behaviour had on them. For instance, one respondent stated:

“It was a one-off incident. Well, I didn’t put a complaint in. I mean sure I was very upset. There was a single incident which took place, which I term as bullying.” (Professional staff #24, female)

Although the individual quoted above was troubled by the behaviour, she did not complain; an aspect which has been explored further in this chapter. This study found that, although workplace bullying is conventionally described as an ongoing

behaviour, individuals also laid importance on the level of impact that these singular bullying incidents had on them. It was also observed that the severity of these incidents led the individuals to term one-time incidences as bullying.

DIRECTIONALITY

Literature reviewed for this study (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011; Hodgins, MacCurtain, & Mannix-McNamara, 2014) suggests that workplace bullying can occur in different directions; downwards (superior to subordinate), horizontal (peer to peer) and upwards (subordinate to superior), as depicted in Figure 26.

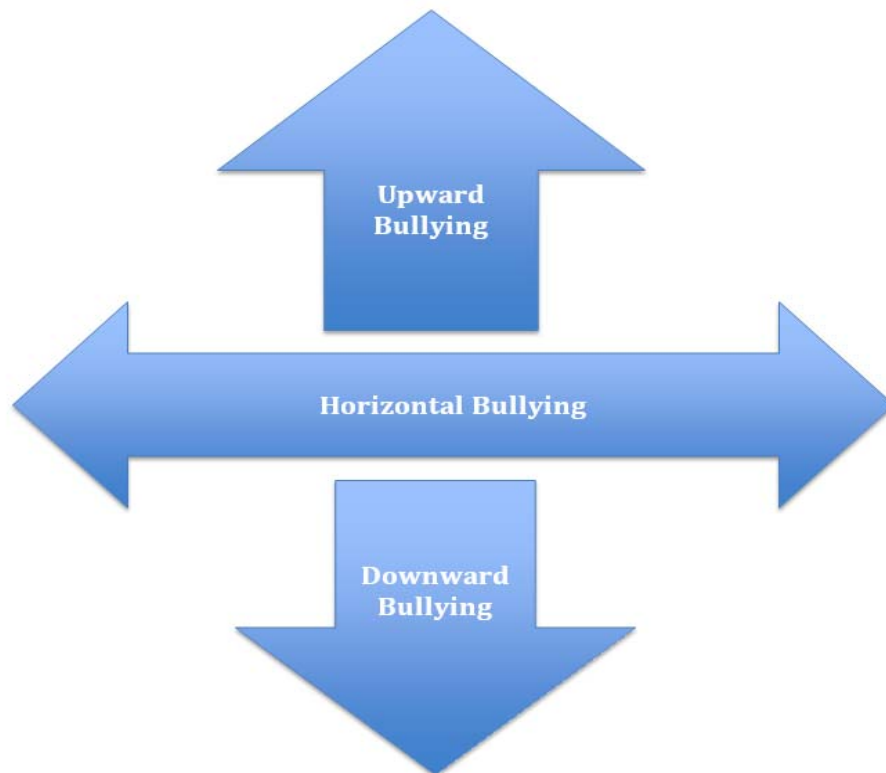


Figure 26: Directionality of workplace bullying in Australian academia

Similar to the findings from the academic staff, the majority of professional staff also reported instances of downward bullying, while only one participant admitted to have suffered upward bullying from his subordinates. This particular participant's

experience is explored further in this section. None of the participants in this study recalled any instance of horizontal bullying. Researchers (e.g. Forssell, 2016; Tsuno & Kawakami, 2015) conventionally viewed workplace bullying as being the behaviour meted out by an individual in a supervisory position to his or her subordinate, known as downward bullying. Most of the professional staff interviewed reported to have experienced downward bullying from their managers. One junior professional staff member recalled her experience of being bullied:

“Because this person has just changed levels, and has become a manager, with all the power that goes with it....and feels justified that he can behave the way he wants with others, even if the other person may feel bullied by his behaviour.”
(Professional staff #22, female)

Along with highlighting the bullying from a manager to his subordinate, the above quote also specifies the role that power plays in bullying scenarios. It is indicated that the alleged perpetrator had significant power over the victim, which enabled him to engage in bullying behaviour in the first place. The role of power in bullying has been reported further in the section on individual factors. Other participants also admitted to have been bullied by their superiors, like the professional member of staff quoted below.

“Yes, I’ve been bullied in the workplace and it was fairly recently, in the last two years. I worked within a service department within the university and we had a particularly harsh team leader.” (Professional staff #30, female)

Some participants, while admitting being bullied by their seniors, also indicated the particular bullying behaviour of the alleged perpetrator, which has been explored further in the section on bullying behaviours:

“I believe I have been bullied, where a female of a position above me [sic] has tried to undermine my work. I think that is bullying to intimidate me.”

(Professional staff #21, female)

While the majority of professional staff reported to have been bullied by their superiors, as a significant exception, two participants admitted to have been bullied by their subordinates. Researchers (e.g. Rayner & Cooper, 2006; Thirlwall, 2015) contend that the occurrence of upward bullying is not very common and is rarely reported. Bullying is said to be upward when individuals at the subordinate level gather enough clout to bully their managers or superiors (Salin, 2003). One manager, who had recently joined the university in a supervisory role, reported being collectively bullied by a pair of his subordinates:

“I felt bullied by the staff I supervised. So I came on board this organisation a year ago and I came into a role as supervisor and supervising two full time staff. They sort of used to feed off each other to sort of thing [sic]. If I had an opinion on something they were the opposite, it was two versus one all the time. So I think they sort of abused my supervisor role to make it work against me. They were just making it really awkward for me to try and effectively be in a

supervisor role, and from my point of view, this certainly was bullying.”
(Professional staff #20, male)

In the above instance, the new manager was bullied by existing junior staff, which might also have been a form of office initiation or a way to ascertain the boundaries. While this individual was fluent in English, given the quality of expression in the quote above, his communication skills might have been an issue; which may have triggered his subordinates to allegedly bully him. Similar experiences were also reported by a professional staff member:

“I would say there was three of us who were bullied the most and we were probably senior in the organisation at the time. So they [alleged perpetrators] targeted us because of our positions. At one point, it was to make us resign so they could have our positions.” (Professional staff #6, female)

As both these quotes show, subordinate staff may come together in order to collectively bully their manager(s). Based on the participants' views, the reasons for this can be multiple, ranging from basic dislike towards the manager, disagreement over work related issues, ruthless ambition for career progression to frustration over the manager's incompetence. Professional staff who reported to have suffered upward bullying stated that it was carried out by a group of individuals, rather than a single person. Victims of upward bullying speculated that such behaviour may be the alleged perpetrators' bid to take over the victim's more senior position in the organisation. This study found that while individuals may not have enough standing of their own to

bully their superiors, such individuals, as a group, may find sufficient courage to engage in bullying their bosses. This finding is consistent with the views of Omari (2007), who also found that cohesive teams have higher rates of bullying incidences, indicating the nature of the group's behaviour.

5.1.2 BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Victims of workplace bullying often identify different behaviours as bullying (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Hogh et al., 2016). The next theme that emerged from the data collected from professional staff were the specific behaviours they viewed as bullying; such as verbal acts, manipulation, victimisation, micro management and social exclusion. Different sub-themes were identified to describe these behaviours which are reported below.

VERBAL ACTS

In line with recent literature (e.g. Ryan, 2016), participants in this study also identified various verbal acts, which they viewed as bullying. The verbal acts identified were abuse (Boyle & Wallis, 2016) and threat (Hershcovis, 2011) which have been explained further below.

ABUSE

Research (e.g. Boyle & Wallis, 2016; Einarsen et al., 2011) has consistently shown verbal abuse as a behaviour which victims regard as bullying. A majority of the participants in this research also reported verbal abuse by the alleged perpetrator directed towards them. This verbal abuse was viewed by the individuals as bullying. Participants in this research stated that verbal abuse was not only offensive in its words, but also at times, the tone in which it was spoken added to its impact on the

victim. A member of professional staff recalled her experience of being verbally abused at work as follows:

“She would be verbally abusive. It would be the way she spoke to me. The words that she used, it was verbal bullying. It was put downs like ‘you’re stupid’ or things like that, it was also ‘what are you doing? let’s do it this way’, ‘that’s not good enough, this is the way we’re going to do it’ [sic]” (Professional staff #13, female)

This individual not only highlighted verbal abuse, but also indicated how such abuse made her feel undermined in her professional capacity; an aspect which has been reported later in the section on manipulation. Similar experiences were shared by other participants as well. Linking verbal abuse to undermining behaviour, another professional staff member commented:

“She would like to publicly humiliate me for any work that she felt wasn’t up to a particular standard rather than talking to me offline. She would speak badly about me to other people in the department. Basically, she would verbally abuse me at any given occasion.” (Professional staff #4, female)

The above statement highlights the wording and the manner in which professional staff were verbally abused in a university setting in presence of co-workers. While the participants may have perceived such behaviours as bullying, it may have been a

performance management measure, reflecting on the individuals' competency. It was also reported that verbal abuse did not only make the victims feel insulted, but the words used also undermined the individual's skills at work. This study found that verbal abuse made the victims feel unappreciated at the workplace and resulted in their feeling bullied. Feeling unappreciated due to being bullied may also have led to an implicit decrease in the victim's productivity, as reported later in the section on consequences of bullying.

THREAT

Threatening an individual is one of the most prominent ways of bullying at work (Nielsen, Einarsen, Notelaers, & Nielsen, 2016; Pilch & Turska, 2015). Most participants in this study also reported to have experienced verbal threat from the alleged perpetrator, which they categorised as bullying behaviour. It was found that by threatening an individual, the alleged perpetrator wanted to make the victim feel less secure in their professional standing at the workplace. One professional staff member stated:

“She had a talent for finding out the thing you loved the most and in my case it was my job, and actually always threatening me [sic].” (Professional staff #16, female)

Similar threatening behaviours were reported across the interviews with the professional staff. Another professional staff member recalled her experience of being bullied, as follows:

“I was on a contract, which was for a year, and they always had the option of not to renew my contract. She (alleged perpetrator) kept threatening me that when my contract comes up for renewal, she may reconsider whether my position is still required or not and may be that I was not needed at all.”
(Professional staff #7, female)

Besides highlighting threatening behaviour, the participants quoted above also indicate the role that job insecurity plays in the incidences of workplace bullying. It may be contended that it was this job insecurity which made victims perceive the threat as being real. A common theme that emerged from the above data extracts is the manner in which the victim’s contractual employment was used as a weapon by the alleged perpetrator to threaten the individual. This study found that alleged perpetrators used the victim’s need to remain employed as a way to bully them. The above extracts also indicate towards the element of power differential between the alleged perpetrators and the victims and also towards the nature of temporary employment.

MANIPULATION

Research (e.g. Peyton, 2003; Treadway, Shaughnessy, Breland, Yang, & Reeves, 2013) shows that perpetrators of workplace bullying are skilled in manipulating others and used manipulation as tool to bully. A majority of participants in this study admitted to have experienced different forms of manipulation by the alleged perpetrator which they viewed as bullying. These behaviours are further explained below.

UNDERMINING BEHAVIOUR

Being subjected to undermining behaviour is a commonly reported manipulative action on the part of alleged perpetrators of workplace bullying (Hershcovis, 2011). Professional staff interviewed for this study also termed undermining behaviour as bullying. It was reported that the alleged perpetrator's main motive behind undermining an individual was to portray themselves as a more capable worker by putting down the individual concerned. Highlighting this aspect, a professional staff commented:

“She just wanted to show that she was more efficient and capable than I was, which is very undermining [sic].” (Professional staff #15, female)

Echoing similar views, another professional staff member shared how such undermining behaviour made her feel less capable:

“A very undermining approach [sic] and constant sense of never feeling that what you did was good enough.” (Professional staff #31, female)

It was not only the victims who held such opinions. Similar views were also iterated by other individuals who had witnessed their co-workers being bullied. This situation indicates that it was not only the victims subjected to undermining behaviour who viewed it as bullying but others who witnessed the behaviour also saw it in the same light. A professional staff member who witnessed another co-worker being bullied recalled her experience from a bystander's perspective:

“Well it started off, I think, with her just being a bit snappy and abrupt and then undermining when talking to the new member of staff. If the new member of staff would ask a question or ask for a second opinion, the other one would try to put her down and make her feel stupid.” (Professional staff #10, female)

The above statements are representative of the views held by a majority of participants in this study. It is indicated that questioning an individual’s working capabilities was one of the most commonly reported form of undermining behaviour among the professional staff in the higher education sector. As professional staff reported working in an environment which requires teamwork and close collaboration, casting aspersions on individuals’ work capacity could adversely impact their professional standing. This study also found that alleged perpetrators engaged in undermining others in order to depict themselves as being more capable; indicating their own professional insecurity in the workplace.

SETTING UP FOR FAILURE

Setting up individuals in way that would make them fail at work (Olive & Cangemi, 2015) was another significant manipulative action which the participants in this study termed as bullying. This study further found that alleged perpetrators created such circumstances at work, which would result in the victim’s failure at work. It was suggested that alleged perpetrators were deliberate in their actions here, with a well thought out plan to ensure that the victim would not be able to accomplish the required tasks. Highlighting such bullying behaviour, a junior professional staff member shared her experience:

“I have been bullied in the workplace. She was kind of underhanded in the way you know she did things, like she’d set you up for failure basically. She would put me into no-win situations.” (Professional staff #7, female)

While the individual quoted above highlighted how subtly the alleged perpetrator may have set her up to fail at work; other participants gave examples of such situations which the alleged perpetrators created for making the victims fail. In this regard, a professional staff member contended:

“She would bully me by basically setting me up for failure. So she’d come into my office and say to me ‘I don’t want you at the next budget meeting, it’s not necessary that you’re there’ and then in the meantime she’d keep people waiting for five minutes, she’d be ‘Oh, I don’t know where she is, I told her to be here at you know 12 o’clock’. So she was making me appear incompetent in front of my fellow workmates but she was actually setting me up to fail, probably because she felt threatened by me.” (Professional staff #4, female)

The above experience highlights the well-executed strategy by the alleged perpetrator to prevent the victim from accomplishing the required tasks. It was found that, by setting the victim to fail, the alleged perpetrator wanted to damage victim’s image in front of other co-workers. The reasons for such motivation were found to be two-fold. Primarily, the alleged perpetrators wanted to portray the victims as incompetent individuals in front of other workers. The alleged perpetrators may have also viewed these victims as better performing individuals, and therefore a threat to their own

professional standing at work, an aspect which has been deliberated further in this chapter. Such insecurity about their own professional standing, was another factor which led the alleged perpetrators to set victims up for failure in order to secure their own positions at work.

WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

Consistent with the literature (e.g. Magee et al., 2015), another significant bullying action that emerged from the interviews conducted with the professional staff was the withholding of information by the alleged perpetrators. Participants in this study reported that alleged perpetrators perceived information at work as significant ingredient for success and used it as a tool to bully others by concealing such information. One professional member of staff stated:

“She’s one of those people that feels that if you keep all the information, you’ll be more powerful. So she doesn’t want to share any information and she doesn’t want to see me doing well.” (Professional staff #15, female)

The individual quoted above not only highlighted the withholding of information, but also accredited the alleged perpetrator’s intention to restrict the victim’s progress at work. This result indicates the role which the alleged perpetrator’s own insecurity at work plays, an aspect which has been covered later in this chapter. Similar views were also echoed by other professional staff members. For instance, a professional staff contended:

“She wanted to be the person who always had all the information, and once she started to get it, then she began to withhold it. Also, any information she had, she would withhold from me, even when it was pertinent to the task that I was doing. She intentionally withheld it so I could not do my job properly.”
(Professional staff #25, female)

The above data extracts are representative of the opinions shared by most of the professional staff members interviewed for this study. A significant aspect which emerged from the data was the importance the alleged perpetrators placed on the information they possessed at work. It may be suggested that the alleged perpetrators often viewed information as power, which they could use as means to bully an individual. While recent research (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015) has also consistently shown power to be at the heart of bullying, participants in this study highlighted that such power may also stem from information individuals have in a workplace. This study found that it was this perceived importance of the information which led these alleged perpetrators to withhold it from others. Preventing the victims from succeeding at work by depriving them of information was reported to be one of the key motivating factor behind such bullying behaviour.

VICTIMISATION

Research (e.g. Francioli, Høgh, et al., 2015; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012) shows that people subjected to workplace bullying often feel victimised at the hands of their alleged perpetrators. Participants in this study also reported to have feared being targeted at work, as result of their bringing bullying into notice. Such a fear of victimisation was found to be one of the key factors that prevented individuals from pursuing formal complaint channels. The most prominent type of victimisation that

emerged from interviews with professional staff was the negative impact, which complaining about bullying would have had on their continuity of jobs and future employment. One professional member of staff shared his fear of victimisation:

“I’ve got a young family at home and I need to be working and if I get involved in something like this [complaining about bullying], then everybody will hear and my career therefore would be well severely damaged. Even more damaged that it is at the moment. So yeah, in a perfect world I would do it.” (Professional staff #17, male)

While the above participant was a victim of workplace bullying, it was not only the victims who felt the fear of victimisation. Similar observations were also reported by participants who witnessed their co-workers being bullied at work. One such witness to workplace bullying contented:

“I have to tell you she was struggling about what to do because she could see potentially there being really quite severe repercussions for her, for a reason of complaint for her manager (sic).” (Professional staff #18, female)

The above experiences illustrate the level of victimisation that individual victims fear may occur due to their complaining about being bullied. A major theme that emerged was the effect that taking such formal channels against bullying may have on the victim’s career. As apparent from the interviews conducted with the professional staff,

the power differential between the victim and alleged perpetrator plays a key role in target victimisation. This study found that alleged perpetrators, being in a more powerful position due to their organisational standing, are better placed to negatively influence the victim's employment. The disparity between the standing of professional and academic staff in higher education institutions is indicated above, and is elaborated further in the section on influencing factors.

MICRO MANAGEMENT

Literature (e.g. Farley, Coyne, Sprigg, Axtell, & Subramanian, 2015; Trad & Johnson, 2014) suggests that alleged perpetrators can bully individuals by micro managing their tasks. In line with this, a recurrent theme that emerged from the interviews conducted with professional staff was the level of micro-management they were subjected to which they classed as bullying. Participants in this study admitted that they were under a constant surveillance from their managers who tried to manage and control their each and every activity at work. A professional member of staff commented:

“I've been bullied in the workplace. I worked within a service department within the university and we had a particularly harsh team leader who micro-managed. He had a very good team who he felt he could micro-manage.” (Professional staff #30, female)

Apart from highlighting the micro-management at the hands of her team leader, the individual quoted above also indicated that such micro-management was unwarranted; as the team as a whole was a productive one. Other participants were more specific in

detailing how they were micro-managed by their superiors. A professional staff member contended:

“I think the key thing was that she was extremely micro managing. You could not make a decision without her okaying it and when you’re two levels down from her, not only was she micro managing her direct reports, but also the people that reported to them.” (Professional staff #31, female)

Similar claims were also echoed by other professional staff. Another professional member of staff stated:

“There was the monitoring, the micro management of what I was doing and of my communications and getting me to do things that I felt ethically uncomfortable with.” (Professional staff #5, female)

The above data extracts depicts the level of micro-management endured by the professional staff in higher education sector. It is indicated that such level of micro-management not only controlled individuals’ activities at work, but also impeded their decision making capabilities. Another aspect of micro-management that emerged from this study was the high level of vigilance that individuals were subjected to, in regard to their activities. This study also found that by micro-managing the staff, the alleged perpetrators also compelled the individuals to do things which were not ethically agreeable to them. Forcing the subordinates to indulge in work activities that they were

not comfortable with, also raises a question on the alleged perpetrators' work ethics and behaviour. It may be contended that these alleged perpetrators, due to the power they had over the victims, used these individuals as scapegoats. For the professional staff interviewed; such an act also amounted to bullying. The role of power, as indicated above, has been discussed before and will be further elaborated on in the section on individual factors.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Scholars (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Elliott & Harris, 2012) accredit social exclusion to be one of the most common workplace bullying behaviours. Social exclusion was also one of the prominent themes that emerged from the data collected from the professional staff for this study. Participants contended that exclusion was the most common way used by the alleged perpetrator to make the victims feel a lesser part of the workplace, an act which the victims viewed as bullying. Literature (e.g. Dentith, Wright, & Coryell, 2015; Lee, Brotheridge, & Bjørkelo, 2013) suggests that social exclusion is used more often by females, and the majority of participants in this study were also female; an aspect which has been deliberated upon further in the discussion chapter. For instance, one female professional staff member recounted her experience of being socially excluded by her manager:

“I’ll come in the morning and I’ll say “good morning” and she will not answer me. Or she goes “huh”. And then the next person will come in and she’ll go “how was your day? How was blah, blah, blah, blah, blah?” and talk like no tomorrow. There are other social things that she would exclude me from. And so now it’s actually affected me that I don’t say good morning to her and don’t

expect to be a part of any social activity at work.” (Professional staff #13, female)

In this case, social exclusion had a marked impact on the victim’s expectations of all social interactions in the workplace. She indicated how such behaviour led her not to expect being a part of the social circle at work, limiting her interaction with other staff as well. This may have adversely affected the level of staff engagement in the organisation; an aspect reported later in the section on consequences of bullying. Echoing similar experiences, another female professional staff member stated:

“She was little bit distant from me, while being perfectly friendly with others. She would have social conversations with others, while I was there, purely excluding me from participating. It just made it quite uncomfortable within the workplace. I would talk to her and I was getting one word answers and it just made me feel really awkward.” (Professional staff #15, female)

There are several notable aspects to these reports of social exclusion. Primarily, it highlights that ignoring someone is one of the simplest way that a person can be made to feel socially excluded, especially when others are given a better reception. It is also evident that such an exclusion results in the victims to feel withdrawn from the social activities at the workplace and adversely affects their own social behaviour with others. This study found that social exclusion does not only affect the victim alone, but also creates a non-collegial atmosphere at the workplace, which indirectly affect other workers as well.

5.1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - RESEARCH QUESTION #1

The first research question aimed at exploring the nature of bullying, which involved defining the behaviour and those actions that the participants viewed as bullying. In line with the views of Branch and Murray (2015) and Gaffney et al. (2012), professional staff in this study defined bullying as being an ongoing behaviour which they found difficult to prove. In contrast to most of the literature, this study's participants also identified singular incidents as bullying based on the severity of the behaviour. Participants also highlighted that the role of intention in identifying it as bullying which could be both downward and upward. While instances of downward bullying are commonly stated in other studies (e.g. Forsell, 2016), upward bullying is rarely reported in organisations. Bullying actions reported by this study's participants included verbal acts, manipulation, victimisation, micro management and social exclusion. Different to the views of academics, micro-management was only cited by professional staff as bullying; an aspect analysed further in the Discussion chapter.

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION #2: THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

The second research question aimed at exploring the different factors that drive or influence workplace bullying in Australian academia. Researchers (e.g. Ramsay, Troth, & Branch, 2011; Salin, 2003) contend that different factors at the individual and the organisational level influence the occurrence of workplace bullying. Certain themes regarding the individual and organisational factors which influenced bullying emerged from the thematic analysis of data collected from the professional staff. In accordance with this study's theoretical framework, the organisational factors have

been classified as external and internal. The findings in this area are illustrated in the figure below (Figure 27) and explained further in this chapter.

**Research Question 2:
How are the bullying behaviours driven by
various forces in Australian academia?**

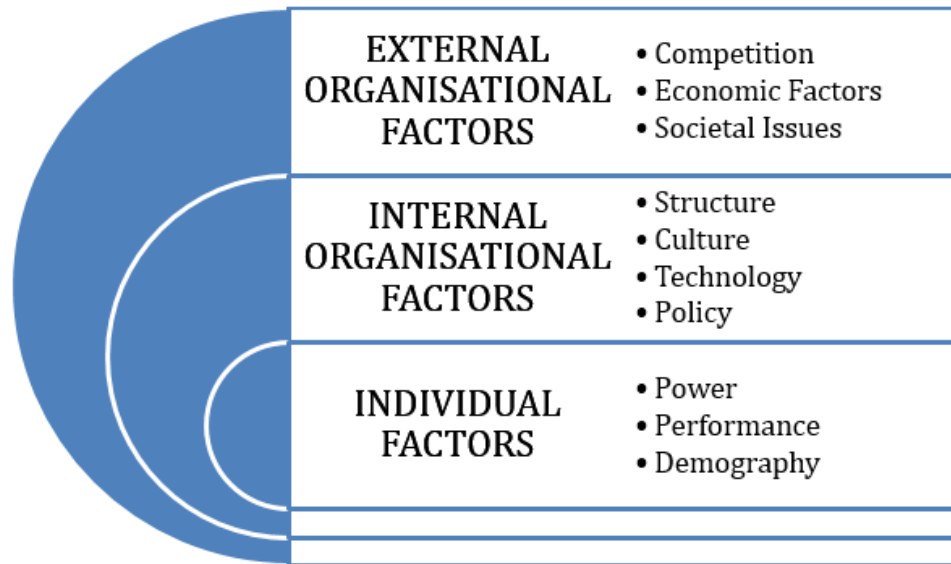


Figure 27: Summary of findings relating to Research Question #2 for professional staff

5.2.1 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of data collected from professional staff was the role of factors external to an organisation, which influence the incidence of bullying. These external factors were classified as competition, economic factors and societal issues, as depicted in Figure 28 and elaborated further below. Although this study’s participants did not explicitly acknowledge the global environment of the

higher education sector, its overarching influence on the external organisational factors can be inferred from the data collected for this study.



Figure 28: External (sectoral) organisational factors influencing workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector

COMPETITION

Increasing competitiveness within the higher education sector has been reported worldwide (Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Shin & Jung, 2014; Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013) as well as in Australia (Dow, 2014). Participants in this study also identified competition among the staff within higher education sector to be a major external factor that influenced the occurrence of bullying. Interestingly, it was found that competition in the sector even made co-workers in the same university have a sense of competing against each other. A professional member of staff commented:

“Yeah, so definitely there’s competition with one another; this sector is highly competitive. This definitely would have been a contributing factor to bullying

because then it made other colleagues against each other. There was no camaraderie at all.” (Professional staff #17, male)

The individual quoted above not only highlighted the competitiveness amongst the staff, but also reflected how such competitiveness may enable the occurrence of workplace bullying. Similar views were also shared by other participants. Another professional staff stated:

“The institution I work in is an academic institution. I also think that within the sector we are in, there is there is a lot of competition, which I think can lead to circumstances where bullying can occur.” (Professional staff #18, female)

The above quotes depict the high level of competition in the sector as being a contributory factor to bullying. It is also indicated that such competitiveness may at times result in turning co-workers against each other. This study found that competition in the higher education sector reduces the level of fellowship among the workers and may even lead to an underlying sense of animosity, which enable the occurrence of bullying.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Another recurring theme that emerged from the analysis of the data collected from professional staff was the role of economic factors in influencing workplace bullying. Different economic factors were identified, which are reported below.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The higher education sector across the world (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014) and in Australia (Dow, 2014) face financial constraints in the form of increased budgetary controls and reduced funding (Brown & Hoxby, 2015). Participants in this study identified these financial constraints faced by the universities as an enabling factor that facilitates bullying. It was found that on-going monetary restrictions at the university's financial end, influenced bullying to occur and continue. A professional member of staff commented:

“And I think that financial pressure which the University faces today, makes the workplace culture more susceptible to bullying.” (Professional staff #22, female)

The individual quoted above indicated how financial pressures can mould a workplace culture to become more vulnerable to the occurrence of workplace bullying. Similar views were also corroborated by other participants. A professional staff member commented:

“I think the university is under quite a bit of financial pressure at the moment. There's a lot of cutbacks. There's a lot of change management, people just want to keep quiet [about bullying] and that contributes to bullying.” (Professional staff #17, male)

The above statements illustrate how continuing financial pressures on the universities can lead to scenarios, which may prove to be conducive for bullying to occur. It is also indicated that financial pressures have led universities to make staff redundant, which creates a sense of fear and insecurity in the existing staff. This study found that such fear of being made redundant also makes the victim reluctant towards pursuing a formal redress against bullying, which in turn encourages the behaviour to continue.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

The increasing budgetary controls in the higher education sector has given rise to contractual or short-term employment of professional staff in the higher education institutions (Desrochers & Kirshstein, 2014; Nicholls, 2014). While exploring workplace bullying, Omari (2006), and Schweder, Quinlan, Bohle, Lamm, and Ang (2015), also note organisations' preference towards having a larger contingent workforce. Underlining the sector's employment patterns, participants in this study also identified the nature of short term contractual employment as being a factor which influenced bullying. It was found that the temporary nature of an employment contract was used as a tool by the alleged perpetrator to bully victims. Such nature of contractual employment also created a sense of job insecurity among the professional staff; as stated earlier in this chapter. A professional staff member shared her experience of being bullied:

“I was bullied by my manager's boss, so my super boss. I was on a contract, which was for a year, and they always had the option of not to renew my contract [sic]. She kept threatening me that when my contract comes up for renewal, she

may reconsider whether my position is still required or not, and may be that I was not needed at all.” (Professional staff #16, female)

Apart from highlighting the changing employment patterns in the higher education sector, the above participant also had a unique experience of being bullied by her direct manager’s boss. As discussed earlier in this chapter, downward bullying usually stems from the immediate line manager and literature reviewed for this study did not reveal any instances of bullying by direct manager’s superior. Although the participant did not elaborate on the role played by her immediate boss, it may be inferred that s(he) may not have been able to prevent bullying due to the power differentials involved.

Similar views on employment patterns were also echoed by participants, who witnessed others being bullied. A professional staff recalled his experience of witnessing bullying:

“There was not the permanence or the confidence. You know, as a contract employee, you don’t have the assurance or the full backing of the organisation, in a way you are always feeling like you are on borrowed time. The organisation doesn’t back you in the same way as it backs an ongoing permanent employee.”
(Professional staff #27, male)

The above data extracts portray the difficult scenario for victims of bullying who are contractually employed. Alleged perpetrators, who were mostly on-going staff, found

contractual employees an easy target to bully, as they did not enjoy the same sense of permanence in an organisation, which the perpetrator had as an on-going employee. Such employment patterns may result in bullying becoming ingrained in the organisational culture which may create a potentially toxic work environment. This study also found that victims, being a temporary employee perceived themselves being less valuable to the organisation in comparison to a permanent employee.

LACK OF ALTERNATE EMPLOYEMENT

The financial constraints prevalent in the higher education domain have resulted in decreasing the number of alternate employment opportunities available within the sector (Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014). Participants in this study also stated the lack of alternative employment opportunities for them in the higher education as a factor that played a significant role in their bullying experience. It was found that victims of bullying, in view of tight job market in the higher education sector, decided to endure bullying, rather than standing against it, which they felt would threaten their employment. Such responses may also be influenced by the period of this study's data collection, which was post 'mining boom' in Western Australia (Brueckner, Durey, Mayes, & Pforr, 2013, p. 112) and at a time when there were multiple reviews being undertaken in the higher education sector. These aspects have been discussed earlier in this thesis. A professional staff member remarked:

“I mean there's a lot riding on people that are in fulltime positions that don't want to [make bullying complaints]. I see why they don't want to and it's a tough world out there for employment. You make it work for you whether you hate the

person or not, you make it work and I think that it's sad but that's it, that's the way it is." (Professional staff #29, female)

The individual quoted above highlighted how victims of workplace bullying perceive that it is in their best interest to endure the behaviour, in face of the current job market in the higher education sector. Similar views were also echoed by other participants. For instance, another professional member of staff stated:

"I mean I needed a job, I needed to pay my mortgage and things like these, so there was that, so I had to stay at work, with the job market out there being so bad. I had to stay at work to pay the mortgage, you know there's no getting around it. Nobody's going to pay your mortgage for you." (Professional staff #26, female)

The above statement depicts how the lack of alternative employment opportunities make the victims accept bullying as their fate, as being employed is of paramount importance to them. This situation also prevented them from making any formal complaints against bullying. This study found that victims tended to adapt their own behaviours to satisfy the bully, as that would they believed, secure the continuity of their employment.

SOCIETAL ISSUES

In the wake of constant work pressure placed on professional staff in the higher education sector (Nicholls, 2014), this study found societal issues in the form of the

taboo around bullying (Johnson, Boutain, Tsai, & De Castro, 2015) to be a major factor which influenced the behaviour's occurrence. It was found that this general hesitancy in openly deliberating upon bullying, was one of the key reasons why the behaviour goes unchecked. The common social attitude towards workplace bullying is aptly stated by one of the professional members of staff:

“I did attempt to communicate the bullying so to speak but at the time the word bullying or even saying you're being bullied came with a bit of stigma.”
(Professional staff #5, female)

While the above quote signified the taboo associated with bullying, some participants also admitted the weakness associated with accepting that one is being bullied. In this regard, a professional staff member observed:

“The word ‘bullying’ is a very powerful word in two ways, one is you are potentially naming someone as a bully, and you are also naming behaviour that might show that you have got a weakness that I am being bullied. So there is that perception that I am weak and timid if I am bullied, so a lot of people don't like the word.” (Professional staff #18, female)

The participant quoted above highlighted the victims' view of perceiving themselves as weaker individuals, in the case they openly admitted been bullied. Such a notion of being considered weaker if one is bullied, stems from the general attitude towards

bullying; wherein a powerful individual bullies a weaker one. This study found that victims of bullying opted to remain silent about the behaviour, rather than complaining about it, as that would portray them as a weaker individual in front of others.

5.2.2 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

Another theme that emerged from the analysis of the data collected from the professional staff, was the factors internal to an organisation which played a role in influencing bullying behaviours. Participants in this study identified different factors in the institutions' internal environment, which played significant role in occurrence and continuance of bullying. In line with this study's theoretical framework, these internal factors were classified as structure, culture, technology and policy; as depicted in Figure 29 and elaborated further below.



Figure 29: Internal organisational factors [based on Myloni, Harzing & Mirza (2007) and Black & Hanson (2014)] influencing workplace bullying in Australian academia

STRUCTURE

Researchers (e.g. Hollis, 2015; McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, & Thomas, 2008) observe that universities have well defined organisational structures with explicit levels of line management. A strong theme in this study was structure, which influenced the occurrence of bullying among the professional staff in universities. Participants in this study identified two different aspects of structures in the universities, which this section explores in detail further. The first aspect was rigid organisational hierarchies in universities. The second was the divide between the academic and professional staff which formed an essential characteristic of a university's structure and two-tiered workforce. These two aspects have been elaborated below.

HIERARCHY

The organisational hierarchies in the universities (Apaydin, 2012; Buka & Karaj, 2012) were reported by a number of participants to be a factor which enabled the incidence and continuity of bullying in these institutions. It was found that the rigidity of these hierarchies resulted in power imbalances between individuals, which has been discussed later in this chapter, allowing those in higher positions to bully others who were in more junior roles. A professional staff member highlighted how bullying can emanate from organisational hierarches in universities:

“Well, I mean the structure. I think it is more the hierarchy in universities that leads to situations, which can be termed as bullying.” (Professional staff #21, female)

While some participants summarily pointed toward the role of hierarchies in the occurrence of workplace bullying, there were others who provided a more detailed account. In this regard, a professional member of staff expressed her views as follows:

“I think sometimes the nature of the universities dare I say, lends itself to bullying because it is very hierarchical. It is very hierarchically structured and people are in very high positions and I think sometimes people think this is just the way things are done around here and I don’t think that is something we should accept because I don’t think it is ever the way things are done.”

(Professional staff #18, female)

The above data extracts highlight that the hierarchical structure of the universities may make them more prone to bullying behaviours. While these hierarchical structures may lead people in higher positions to exude a lot of authority, it may also make them perceive it as acceptable behaviour to bully others. The hierarchical structure of the universities also means that bullying victims have to go through various organisational levels if they want to pursue an official channel of redress. This study found that hierarchies also prevented victims from taking a formal stand against bullying, implicitly making them endure the behaviour as routine; an aspect which has been explored further in this chapter. This study identifies such a hierarchy to form the core of a higher education institution’s structure. In line with this study’s theoretical framework, the Competing Values Framework by Cameron and Quinn (2011) identifies such structure based environment as ‘hierarchy’. This study found universities to have a rigid hierarchical structures, which yield enormous level of

control over its workforce. Participants in this study also highlighted that it is these high levels of control stemming from organisational hierarchies which enable the alleged perpetrators to freely engage in bullying behaviours.

DIVIDE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC STAFF

Another aspect of structure which was reported by the participants was the divide between the professional and academic staff in a university environment; an aspect consistent with the literature (e.g. Favaloro, 2015; Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012). Professional staff interviewed for this study contended that universities place more value on academic staff, sometimes at the cost of professional staff. This aspect leads academic staff to assume that they may treat the professional staff in any way that they deem fit. Underlining how alleged perpetrators may specifically target individuals or a certain group of workers, Omari, Paull, D'Cruz, and Guneri (2014, p. 167) term these victims as 'sanctioned targets' of workplace bullying in an organisation. Highlighting this aspect, one senior manager in a university shared her experience as follows:

“Academics sometime think that they are a bit more higher up than the professional staff. The power differential between an academic and a professional staff member is enormous, and a lot of academics are free to do things that can actually be construed as bullying, they're free to have a level of power and manipulation over professional staff. That's really quite huge.”
(Professional staff #16, female)

The individual quoted above not only emphasised the divide between professional and academic staff in the higher education sector, but also highlighted that power differentials arising from such divide could lead to bullying behaviours. The role of power has been discussed later in the section on individual factors. While some participants pointed at the power imbalance between academics and professional staff, there were others who contended that universities also placed lesser importance on professional staff. A professional member of staff contended:

“I’d get academics abusing me all the time, so that was part of the job here. Academic staff you know telling me off for various things [sic]. They feel it is their right to abuse the professional staff. They probably think that they are superior to us and therefore the attitude ‘I can treat a professional staff how I want to’. I think there is a lack of parity in universities between the academic and professional staff. As professional member of staff, we are not respected and we are not taken seriously.” (Professional staff #7, female)

The above data extracts are representative of the views expressed by a number of professional staff members, who stated that academic staff held themselves to be superior to professional staff based on their position of being an academic. This sense of superiority also led academic staff members to feel permitted to treat professional staff members in an unjust manner, which was perceived as bullying by the victims. Another aspect which was highlighted by participants in this research, was the tacit acceptance that such divide has from the organisation. It was reported that universities tend to place more importance on academic staff and less on professional staff, who

are just viewed as an auxiliary, and existing in support roles to the academics. Being regarded as a less important faction, this study's professional staff participants reported to perceive a lack of due respect in the university environment, often resulting in their concerns being ignored by these institutions. This study also found that organisational hierarchies in universities aid in generating this gap between the academic and professional staff, which may lead to incidence of bullying.

CULTURE

Consistent with recent research (e.g. Laschinger & Fida, 2014; Pilch & Turska, 2015), a recurring theme that was identified by the professional staff was the role that organisational culture plays in influencing workplace bullying. Participants reported different aspects of organisational culture, which facilitated the behaviour's occurrence. These aspects have been explored below:

LEADERSHIP

The role of leadership in either condoning or condemning workplace bullying is widely acknowledged by various researchers (e.g. Francioli, Conway, et al., 2015; Nielsen, 2013; Tsuno & Kawakami, 2015) which also shapes the organisational culture (Laschinger & Fida, 2014). Professional staff interviewed for this study primarily stated the role that leadership of the organisation played in the occurrence of bullying. Highlighting how leadership moulds organisational culture, a professional member of staff remarked:

“I do say that it depends upon leadership within an organisation, whether it [bullying] is acceptable behaviour at the leadership level and then it trickles

down and then it becomes a norm. After all, it is the leaders who define what an acceptable behaviour is and what isn't." (Professional staff #9, female)

The individual quoted above indicated how leadership influences organisational culture, which in turn either promotes or abhors workplace bullying. It was also found that some individuals in senior leadership positions in the universities chose to ignore the bullying, rather than taking steps to stop it. One manager in a university pointed towards the role of senior leadership:

"So like the vice chancellor, the buck stops with him and he's the role model for everybody to follow. So if he doesn't do anything about it then everybody else can happily ignore it. The behaviours he did not criticise at that time, it also meant that he implicitly endorsed them (sic)." (Professional staff #31, female)

The above quoted participant depicted how senior leaders in the universities may ignore bullying, which may result in others following their example. Such tolerance towards bullying from people in higher positions may make the behaviour more acceptable at the organisational level. Such tacit acceptance of workplace bullying by the leadership may result in this behaviour becoming embedded in the organisational culture. When such behaviour continues unchecked by the leadership, it may lead the workforce to lose trust in the leadership. In this regard, a professional staff member remarked:

“If the bully has the support of the upper management then there is no point of me standing against the person. If I do, it is his word against mine and then they will believe him and not me.” (Professional staff #17, male)

The above quote not only indicates the level of support the alleged perpetrator has from the leaders, but it also portrays the lack of trust the victim has in the organisation’s leadership. This study found that the implicit support of bullying by the leaders also prevented the victims from taking a formal channel to redress the behaviour; as they perceived leaders of being supportive and trusting of the alleged perpetrator, rather than the victim.

TOLERANCE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The literature (e.g. Raskauskas, 2006; Skinner et al., 2015) suggests that universities tend to implicitly tolerate workplace bullying which may also lead to the behaviour becoming deep-seated in the organisational culture. A majority of participants in this research also identified the universities’ tolerance towards bullying as a key factor that allowed such behaviours to occur and continue. It was found that such tolerance at the organisational level towards bullying made the victims perceive it as being acceptable and routine. A member of staff commented:

“We are told that our organisation has a low tolerance to bullying. Really? I don’t think, I think they like to portray this picture perfect, we don’t accept this but I think really a lot of it is swept under the rug. It is just another thing that the university does not care about.” (Professional staff #21, female)

While the individual quoted above accredited such tolerance to universities' bid to preserve their model workplace image, some participants linked such intolerance with the universities' inaction in dealing with the behaviour. A professional staff member shared her views on this aspect:

“I haven't come forward and said anything but I think I also most feel that if I did it, it wouldn't be considered that serious it would just be somehow brushed under the carpet, so I don't think they have played any role in preventing the bullying behaviour.” (Professional staff #22, female)

The above statement highlights that even when the universities formally claim to have zero tolerance towards bullying, it was not what the victims felt was being practiced. It was found that universities adopt these anti-bullying policies to portray themselves as being an ideal workplace, but in practice, ignoring the behaviour is preferred more than having to deal with it. Similar views was expressed by other participants as well. A professional member of staff observed:

“The university tolerated it [bullying], basically tolerated it, and certainly didn't do enough to prevent it.” (Professional staff #27, male)

While the above quotes depict the tolerance towards bullying at the organisational level, they also indicate the issue of preventing the behaviour from occurring in the first place. This study found that such tacit tolerance towards bullying in the universities also resulted in these institutions not making active efforts to prevent the behaviour from occurring by implementing the policies; an aspect which has been discussed later in this chapter.

ROLE OF EMPLOYEES

Whether workplace bullying is condemned or condoned largely depends upon an organisation's employees who play a major role in shaping its culture (Berlingieri, 2015; Francioli, Conway, et al., 2015). A major theme that emerged from the data collected from the professional staff was the role employees played in the incidence of bullying. Participants in this study identified the employees in different roles who influenced the behaviour. These roles include those of witnesses, alleged perpetrators and human resources department, which have been explained further below.

WITNESSES

Literature (e.g. Chen & Park, 2015; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011; Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse, & van Dam, 2016; Paull, Omari, & Standen, 2012) suggests that workplace bullying does not only affect the victims but also the bystanders, who witness the behaviour. The role of employees witnessing a co-worker being bullied was another factor that was identified in this study which influenced bullying. Professional staff interviewed stated that most of their co-workers chose to be mute spectator to the behaviour, while they were being bullied. A professional staff member shared her experience:

“The other staff members who worked for the organisation did not want to participate, they did not condone the behaviour, but they did not want to get involved in any sense with either side, they just wanted to do their job, come in and go home.” (Professional staff #6, female)

While the above statement reflects that witnesses did not take formal stand against the bullying of their co-workers, they informally condemned the behaviour. It was found that co-workers did not want to jeopardise their own standing in the workplace, by coming out in the open against the behaviour. Highlighting this aspect, a professional staff member expressed her views:

“Getting back to the co-workers, there was that ‘oh my goodness, I can’t believe this is happening to you’ and all the rest of it, but no-one wanted to stand up. It’s best not to say anything. I also don’t want to rock the boat, so no-one wants to step out because they need their job.” (Professional staff #4, female)

The individual quoted above depicts the difficult situation faced by the co-workers witnessing workplace bullying. Although they do not agree with the behaviour, these bystanders did not voice their opinion against bullying, as they feared being victimised, including possible job loss, due to their support to the victim. The issue of job insecurity has also been discussed earlier in this chapter. This study found that inaction on the part of the witness may stem from their fears of potential harm, due to their intervening in a workplace bullying situation.

ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

Literature (e.g. Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011; Sidle, 2010) suggests that the alleged perpetrators play a key role in the occurrence of workplace bullying. Participants in this study also highlighted the role of the alleged perpetrators and observed that one of the factors which influenced bullying was the value the university placed on these perpetrators. The manner in which bullying was dealt with by the universities depended upon who was valued more by the organisation, the alleged perpetrator or the victim. In this regard, one professional member of staff shared her experience:

“In this particular situation and regarding this particular individual, I think the culture was very much one of protecting her for her value to the university.”
(Professional staff #31, female)

The individual quoted above depicts how the culture of the university is about protecting the alleged perpetrators, who may be more productive in terms of output, at the cost of other multiple employees. Omari, Paull, and Crews (2013, p. 2) label such individuals as ‘protected species’ within an organisation, for whom the organisational rules may somehow be manipulated to their benefit. Similar views were also expressed by the participants who witnessed others being bullied. A professional member of staff recalled:

“I have heard of cases where people have been actually talked to by, you know whoever, if they’re bullied and I have heard of that happening. But it depends how much importance the university places on that person staying a staff member, the actual bully. The value of the bully is important so you keep him.”

(Professional staff #15, female)

The above data extract is representative of the views of majority of participants who stressed the value of the alleged perpetrator being an influencing factor. It was found that in cases in which the universities ascertained the alleged perpetrators to be more valuable over the workers that were being bullied, the choice was made in favour of the perpetrators at the cost of the victims. Such organisational support for the alleged perpetrators may have led to beleaguered staff leaving, increasing the staff turnover; an aspect explored later in the section on organisational consequences.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Recent research (e.g. Cowan, 2012; D’Cruz, Noronha, & Beale, 2014; Harrington, Warren, & Rayner, 2015) highlights the role played by an organisation’s Human Resources department (hereafter referred to as HR) in the occurrence of workplace bullying. The role of HR was another factor that was identified in this study, which influenced workplace bullying among professional staff. Participants interviewed found HR to be unsupportive to the victims when approached for seeking help in the matter. The most striking contention made by the participants was the onus being put on the victim by HR to prove the bullying. Highlighting this aspect one professional member of staff recalled her experience:

“I went to HR, they questioned me about it, they asked me to provide a diary, they said there was nothing that they could really do unless I put it through a formal complaint and then it would affect my opportunities of employability here.” (Professional staff #29, female)

The individual quoted above highlights the plight of victims in relation to universities’ HR department. Although filing an initial formal complaint may be a standard HR practice, the victims, who are already under pressure due to being bullied, are required to keep and provide a record of events. As stated in the quote above, this pressure is compounded when the HR department, in a way of veiled threat, suggests the victims that their filing a formal complaint may jeopardise their future employability at the institution. While the HR function may view such assessment as a realistic outcome of the situation, victims often perceived such outcome as a threat to the continuity of their employment, increasing their job insecurity; explored earlier in this chapter. Some participants also perceived that HR may be more supportive of the alleged perpetrators, who happen to be academics. In this regard, a professional member of staff stated:

“If I go to HR, I am professional member of staff, and say that a Doctor, a Lecturer and a Professor are bullying me, who you think they would believe.”
(Professional staff #9, female)

The individual quoted above indicated a divide in universities’ workforce, where the organisations place more value on the academics over the professional staff, as

reported earlier in this chapter. Another aspect that was stressed upon by the participants was the lack of follow-up by HR on the bullying complaints made by them. A professional staff member commented:

“There was no real effort made after my complaint to HR to follow this up or pursue it in any real serious way, and to this day I see no sign of that in other situations and circumstances where I have seen other people bullied.”
(Professional staff #12, female)

From the above statement, negligence on the part of the universities’ HR departments can be seen in the lack of follow up on complaints of bullying. Participants also claimed to have witnessed such negligence and delay, not only in their own cases, but with other cases as well. This study found that such negligence not only delays resolving the issue; but it also conveys to the victims that bullying is not a matter of great concern for the university.

TECHNOLOGY

Recent research (e.g. Farley et al., 2015; Trad & Johnson, 2014) suggests that modern technology provides tools for the alleged perpetrators to minutely monitor individuals’ activities, a behaviour which can be termed as bullying (Fox & Stallworth, 2010). The professional staff interviewed in this study also identified technology as being an influencing factor towards the incidence of bullying. Participants viewed emails and phone calls as tools which were used by the alleged perpetrator to bully an individual.

This indicates the enabling role which technology plays in the incidence of bullying.

A professional staff member shared her experience:

“I can give examples of when we were in <campus name> and there were thirty-six emails in one day, this type of thing [bullying]. We would be getting emails all through the night, he would be phoning every five minutes.” (Professional staff #30, female)

In the above statement, the victim describes how she felt bullied by the excessive emailing and phone calls by her superior. Another participant described how she was bullied via emails by the alleged perpetrator:

“She bullied me by emails. In this email she said “you know, we’ve had people come through like you before, that have either gotten it or conformed or have left and moved on”. So the threat was that either you fit in or you leave.” (Professional staff #31, female)

The individual quoted above highlighted how she was threatened by an email from the alleged perpetrator. Such constant contact and threat by the alleged perpetrators, as indicated in the above data extracts, was only made possible through the use of technological aids of communication, like emails and telephone. This finding also links to the excessive use of technological tools as means of bullying, which Forssell (2016) labels as cyber bullying. This study found that these technological aids play in

the hands of the alleged perpetrator and enables the bullying behaviour to occur and continue.

POLICY

The occurrence of workplace bullying and its redress largely depends upon the robustness of the organisations' anti-bullying policies (Hurley, Hutchinson, Bradbury, & Brwone, 2016). Participants in this research also reported universities' policies regarding bullying to have played a major role in the occurrence of the behaviour. The major aspect that emerged from the data was the victims' perception about the policies being in place but not being implemented. Such non-implementation of policies make the victims perceive that these policies are only there for compliance requirements. A professional member of staff commented:

“There is an anti-bullying policy but it is not enforced. I was not even aware of it initially, till I looked for it. And I am sad to say that the policy is not worth the paper it's written on. You may as well rip it up and just forget about it because it's just for show.” (Professional staff #29, female)

Similar views were also echoed by other professional staff members. Another manager in a university, stressing the lack of implementation of the policy commented:

“Well, the institution in question is very good at talking but not walking the talk and in my opinion whilst they do pay a lot of lip service to this anti-bullying policy and a workplace that's free of harassment and promotes integrity and

respect and enquiry and all of those things, unfortunately when it comes to actually walking the talk, it's a very different kettle of fish and this was one more example of that." (Professional staff #12, female)

The above statements not only highlight that anti-bullying policies are not actively enforced in universities environments, they also indicate the lack of awareness about such policy in the institution's workforce. Participants in this study also reported that such lack of awareness and non-implementation of policies stemmed from the lesser importance placed by the universities on the issue of workplace bullying. This study found that bullying is able to flourish in university environments as victims are often not aware of policies in place to redress this behaviour. It was also found that in instances in which the victims were aware about the policy, they did not seek to use it; as they perceived the university as not being serious about implementation of these policies.

5.2.3 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Individual factors influencing workplace bullying was the third theme that emerged from the analysis of the data collected from professional staff. Participants in this study labelled these individual factors as a driving force behind the occurrence and continuance of workplace bullying. Various sub-themes were identified in the individual factors, which are depicted in Figure 30 and explained.

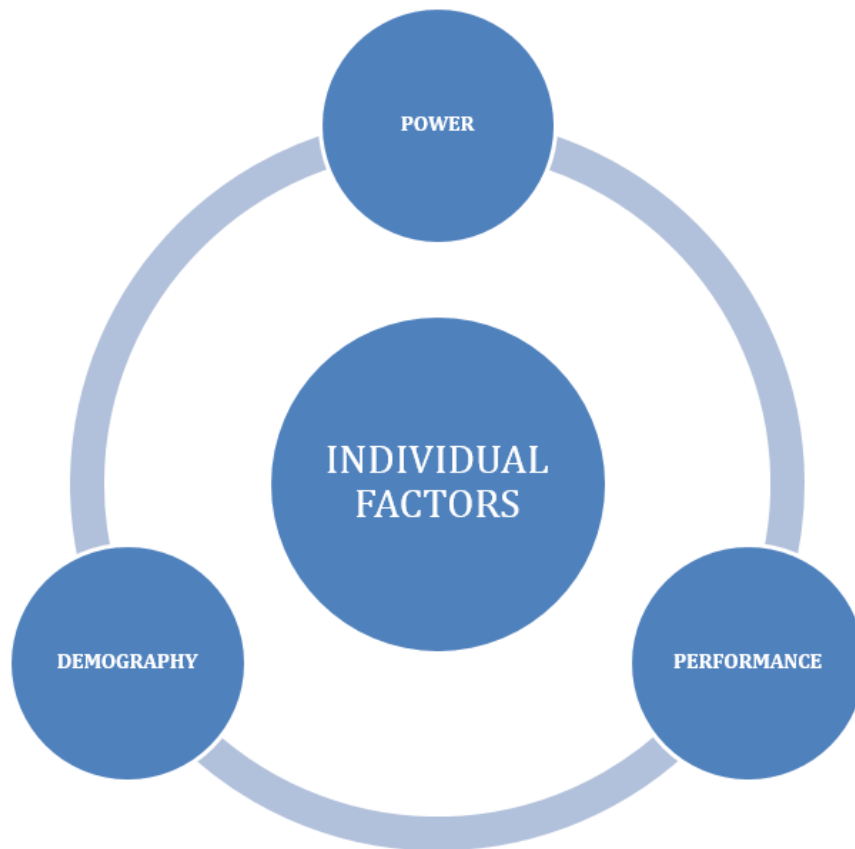


Figure 30: Individual factors influencing workplace bullying in Australian academia

POWER

In line with literature reviewed (e.g. Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; McKay, 2014), a recurrent theme that emerged from the interviews conducted with the professional staff was the role that power played in the occurrence and continuance of bullying. Participants in this study reported that power imbalance, amongst the professional staff, and between professional and academic staff, allowed the alleged perpetrators to bully individuals who had lesser power. Such views were found throughout the interviews conducted with the professional staff. For instance, a professional member of staff shared her experience:

“Well she had power over me, yeah, she was not my direct boss but my boss’s boss, so if I made a decision she could overturn it. Yeah, so there was definitely a power imbalance that allowed her to bully me. Yeah, she would overturn my decisions so I would come back really from a meeting I’d say that I need to do this and this and this and she wouldn’t trust my opinion and my experience.”
(Professional staff #7, female)

The individual quoted above not only highlighted the power differential between her and the alleged perpetrator, but also indicated towards the undermining nature of bullying, as reported earlier in this chapter. Similar views of perceived power differential were echoed by other participants as well. Another professional member of staff contended that:

“She was in a position of power, and was trying to fire me for things that really had nothing to do with me. She did this on purpose as she knew that I would stress about it. She could do this as she was in a position of power over me and knew that I could not formally do anything about it.” (Professional staff #16, female)

As indicated in the quote above, power differentials not only facilitated the occurrence of bullying but also deterred victims from seeking formal channels to address behaviour. A few participants also stated that academic members of staff, due to their position had the power to bully professional staff. Highlighting this aspect, one

professional staff recalled her experience of being bullied by an academic member of staff:

“The power imbalance also came from the fact that she is an academic member of staff, whereas I am a professional member of staff. She was a lecturer, and now as result of her promotion, she is now a senior lecturer. I am still the same level professional member of staff, and this gave her full liberty to bully me.”

(Professional staff #9, female)

A disparity between the professional and academic staff member is evident from this statement, and this aspect has been deliberated upon earlier in this chapter. While the above data extracts reflect how power can enable alleged perpetrators to bully individuals, there were other participants who contended that some alleged perpetrators of bullying thought they had power, even when they did not. In this regard, a professional staff member remarked:

“Power imbalance, total power imbalance, I think this person is on a power trip. They are king of the castle, which really isn’t the case.” (Professional staff #21, female)

It is evident from the data collected for this study that power plays a major role in inciting bullying to occur and continue. Participants in this study stated that it is this power which gives alleged perpetrators freedom to behave in whatever way they deem fit with people who have lesser authority than them or are placed under them. It was

also reported that such power imbalance dissuaded the victims from pursuing a formal channel against bullying. This was mainly due to victims' view that these alleged perpetrators, due to their powerful positions, would be able to skew the situation in their favour, causing more harm to the victims. The reluctance to pursue formal channel against bullying has been elaborated earlier in this chapter.

PERFORMANCE

Researchers (e.g. Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; Keashly & Nowell, 2003; Salin, 2003) have consistently deliberated upon the role of performance in incidences of workplace bullying. The majority of participants in this study also reported performance to be a major factor that influenced the initial occurrence and continuance of workplace bullying. It was found that the alleged perpetrators felt threatened by the individuals who performed better than them. This perceived threat from certain individuals, in terms of performance, led these alleged perpetrators to engage in bullying behaviours. In this regard, one professional member of staff stated:

“I think for her may be she just sees me as a threat, or may be lots of people want to work less and they do want to make other people look bad. Just because I don't announce how much work I do every day doesn't mean I do any less work.” (Professional staff #15, female)

Similar experiences of being perceived as a threat, in terms of performance, were made by other participants in this study as well. Another professional staff member highlighted how the alleged perpetrator felt threatened by her work:

“This lady who’s bullying me, likes to tell me how much better she is. I think she feels threatened by me, not because I’m fantastic but because I want to work hard, because I have things that I do.” (Professional staff #13, female)

Some participants also contended that by engaging in bullying behaviours, the alleged perpetrators often tried to camouflage their own lower work performance. A professional member of staff reflected on her experience of being bullied at work:

“Bullying behaviour often comes from these people who are not really very confident within themselves. So what they do, they put down the other person who works better than them to make themselves look good. That is just a way of covering up your poor behaviours and your poor workmanship.” (Professional staff #26, female)

The above statements reflect how better performing individuals can attract the alleged perpetrators to bully them. The insecurity of the alleged perpetrators, in terms of their own lower levels of performance, was identified as a primary reason behind the initial occurrence of bullying. When these perpetrators saw other individuals, who performed better; they decided to bully these individuals; in order to bring down their performance levels and make them look incompetent in front of other co-workers. It was reported that bullying was used as tool by these alleged perpetrators to damage the victims’ professional standing in the workplace. This study also found that alleged perpetrators, who were used to doing less work, tended to bully those individuals who worked more and had implicitly raised the benchmark of performance for all.

DEMOGRAPHY

The role of demographic factors in influencing workplace bullying behaviours is highlighted by various researchers (e.g. Hollis, 2014; Salin, 2015; Salin & Hoel, 2013). Professional staff interviewed for this study also contended how demographic factors may influence the occurrence and continuation of workplace bullying. Age, gender and an individual's cultural background were the major demographic factors reported in this study, which are further explained below.

AGE

In line with other studies on bullying in academia outside Australia (e.g. Hollis, 2015), professional staff in this study also reported individual demographic factors like age of both the alleged perpetrator and the victim, to have influenced the occurrence and continuance of bullying amongst the professional staff. Underlining the role played by age in the incidence of bullying, most of the participants believed that they were targeted with bullying due to their young age. One professional member of staff contended:

“I feel I'm being bullied because in my workplace when I do things they constantly refer to my age, saying things about it. They say things like ‘well in my twenty years’ experience in this field’, ‘I know that because I've worked in the area longer’. And although they don't directly say ‘you're too young; you don't understand that’ they make lots of hints and comments. So they say ‘well you know how I know that? Because I have done this for twenty years’ and ‘I worked in this organisation before you were even born’. And yes, I get the fact

that I'm younger than you are, but they're making a big deal about it.”
(Professional staff #13, female)

While the above participant reported age to be the background factor influencing bullying, as it was indirectly hinted upon; they were others who identified age to be the major factor behind their being bullied. Another professional staff member commented:

“I really do think that it's about my age, and that she just wants to bring me down. I am twenty years younger than her, this person that's bullying me, and I'm a level below her and she constantly finds the need to tell me what she did in her old job. Why are you telling me this? To slap me down?” (Professional staff #22, female)

The above statements demonstrate that age may play a role in influencing bullying among the professional staff in the higher education sector. Participants reported that age was directly or indirectly referred to by the alleged perpetrators, indicating that being young was one of the factors that made victims susceptible to bullying. This study found that alleged perpetrators felt insufficient in their own selves, when they saw professional staff much younger to them achieving organisational positions just below their own level. This age related sense of self- inadequacy may be one of the factors that triggered bullying in the first place. Recent studies (e.g. Reknes, Einarsen, Knardahl, & Lau, 2014; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007) present mixed views

about the influence of younger or older age on workplace bullying, usually linking it to the national culture; an aspect also explored earlier in this chapter.

GENDER

In line with recent research (e.g. Salin, 2015; Salin & Hoel, 2013), the gender of the alleged perpetrator also emerged as a significant factor that influenced bullying amongst professional staff. Recent research (e.g. Salin & Hoel, 2013; Yamada, Cappadocia, & Pepler, 2014) contends that women, being indirect, are more likely to indulge in bullying than men, who are more direct in their behaviours. The majority of participants interviewed in this study reported that women were inclined to engage in bullying behaviours amongst the professional staff, which they perceived to be a woman's way of asserting her authority in a workplace. In this regard, a female professional staff member commented:

“So bullying would happen, more implicitly. Well, females are the worst for that. They are really, yeah, underhanded, when they decide to bully someone.”
(Professional staff #26, female)

Similar observations were made not only by the victims of bullying, but also by those participants who witnessed others being bullied. A senior female manager in a university observed:

“A number of the different cases it has not been men, it has all been women, I haven't had anybody come forward to me to say they have been bullied by a

man. I have had women and men who come to say that they have been bullied by women.” (Professional staff #18, female)

The above statements reflect the significant role that gender plays in the incidence and occurrence of bullying. Participants in this study contended that women were more apt in implicitly engaging in bullying others. Participants wondered if this was due to the alleged perpetrators’ gender, which made them feel a more urgent need to express authority, and bullying others as an easy tool to do so. On an exceptional note, one male professional staff member, who witnessed his co-workers being bullied, contended that women may be more susceptible to regard themselves as victims of bullying; a view also supported by Salin and Hoel (2013). Highlighting this aspect, he remarked:

“It could have been about women too, because I was the only man in that work team. I believe, you know, at the time of these incidences, all those who cried bullying were women.” (Professional staff #27, male)

Such views, were however, not shared by any other participants in this study. The above statement is quoted for its exclusivity in illustrating the susceptibility of women being the victims of bullying, which can be an area for further research. It is also indicates that how men may view women as being more comfortable in applying the label of bullying to behaviours, which men would not have.

INDIVIDUAL'S CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The influence of an individual's cultural background on the incidence of workplace bullying has consistently been supported by various researchers (e.g. Jacobson, Hood, & Buren III, 2014; Omari & Sharma, 2016; Yokoyama et al., 2016). Participants in this study also reported individual's cultural background to be a factor, which influenced bullying among the professional staff. It was found that victims' national culture was one of the characteristics that the alleged perpetrator implicitly picked on. In the views of the victims, being from a culture different to that of the alleged perpetrator, was one of the primary reasons why they were targeted with bullying. A professional member of staff shared her experience of being bullied:

“She was English and class structure of society. The other person that she favoured was also English. You see I was not. That puts a finger on the bullying that is happening here. I'm not from their culture and so she was English yes, white English but I was white Australian...because I was not English I assume that that was what it was.” (Professional staff #2, female)

The above quote depicts how the victim felt that she was being bullied, due to her cultural background, which was different from that of the alleged perpetrator; although both were white but from different countries. The role of culture is further strengthened by the view indicated above that the alleged perpetrators favoured other workers who were from a similar culture. The influence of culture was also reported by other participants as well. Another professional staff member, who had a similar experience, opined:

“I think there were cultural things. I was white, she was white but she was from Queensland, I am from England, I sounded even more English then, and there was this underlying resentment nationalistic underlying resentment. I mean ultimately ... Ah! Pompous young English guy who does not know what it is to work hard. I really feel that if I'd been a Queenslander and a hard yakka [sic] and she is a Queenslander, well, it would have been less of a resentment.”
(Professional staff #11, male)

In both the above data extracts, the role of individual national culture, that is English and Australian, is highlighted in the incidence of bullying. While in the first extract, the alleged perpetrator is English and the victim is Australian, the scenario reverses in the second data extract. Both the cases, however, portray the differences between the British and Australian cultures. It is also implicitly indicated that there are different sub-cultures which exist in the modern multicultural Australia (French, Strachan, & Burgess, 2014), which influence workplace practices (Paull & Omari, 2016). In line with this study's theoretical framework, the data collected on culture was analysed in accordance with the typology of organisational culture by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). Analysis based on this typology suggest that British culture is task oriented and decentralised 'guided missile culture', where individuals tend to complete specific projects with people of similar orientation. This aspect is well evidenced by the first data extract, where the alleged perpetrator favoured another person from the same culture, over others. Analysis based on the typology of organisational culture by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), indicated that

Australian culture is chiefly a role-oriented culture, despite being hierarchy based; wherein people give more value to self-made individual contributions and the role such contributions plays in one's success. This perspective is demonstrated in the second data extract, wherein the victim, alleges that he was bullied as he was not perceived to know the value of hard work, being from England; an aspect which forms a central ingredient for achieving success in the Australian cultural context. Both the data extracts suggest that individual's view each other's behaviour, is largely based on their own particular cultural orientations. Overall, this study found that interplay of individuals' different cultural backgrounds played a significant role in influencing bullying behaviours in professional staff in the Australian higher education sector.

5.2.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - RESEARCH QUESTION #2

The second question focussed on identifying the various factors that influenced workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector. These factors were categorised as organisational external and internal factors as well as individual factors. Competition (Shin & Jung, 2014), economic factors (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014) and societal issues (Johnson et al., 2015) were found to be the major external organisational factors, which influenced the occurrence of bullying. Parallel to the views of academic staff, the overarching influence of NPM could also be inferred from the interviews of professional staff. The internal organisational factors found in this study were classed into structure (McKay et al., 2008), culture (Pilch & Turska, 2015), technology (Farley et al., 2015) and policy (Hurley et al., 2016). In contrast to the views held by academic staff, professional staff highlighted the use of technological tools such as emails and phones as tools of bullying. Power (Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015; McKay, 2014), performance (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015) and demography (Hollis, 2014; Salin, 2015) were identified to be the major individual

factors influencing workplace bullying in the higher education sector. Similarities and differences between the findings of academic and professional staff have been analysed further in the Discussion chapter.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTION #3: CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING

The final research questions explored the different consequences of workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector. Literature (e.g. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Hurley et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014) consistently highlights how workplace bullying affects individuals (Hogh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2011), organisations (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010) and society at large (Omari, 2007). The thematic analysis of the data collected from the professional staff presented certain themes of consequences that were endured by the individual victims and the organisations, as depicted in Figure 31 below and explored thereafter.

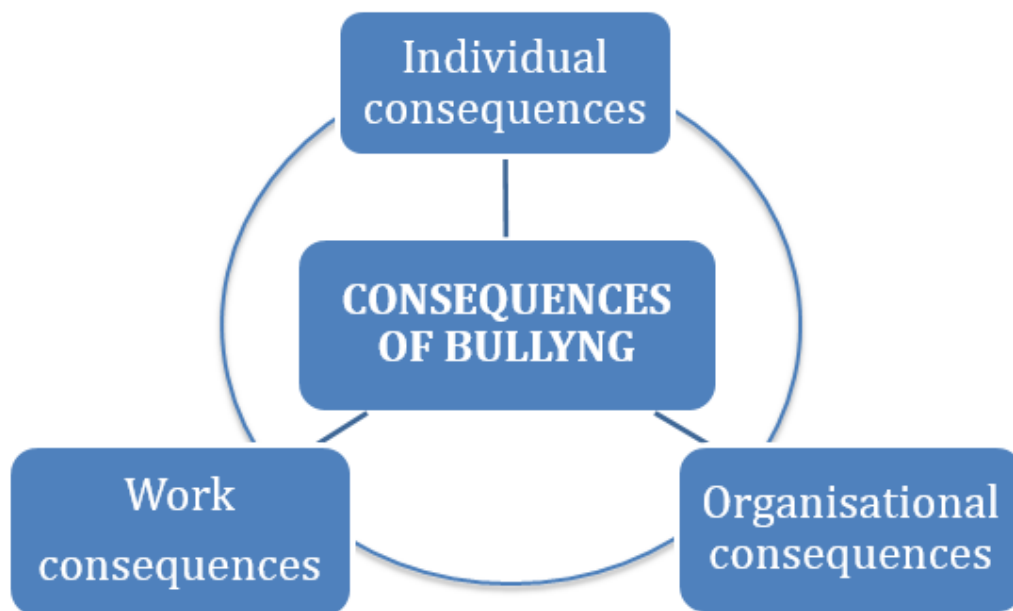


Figure 31: Summary of findings relating to Research Question #3 for professional staff

5.3.1 INDIVIDUAL CONSEQUENCES

Spence Laschinger and Nosko (2015) observe that workplace bullying severely affects the individuals who suffer from this behaviour. The first theme that emerged from the analysis of data collected from the professional staff were the different consequences of bullying suffered by an individual. Various subthemes were identified in this category, as illustrated in the figure below (Figure 32) and explored thereafter.

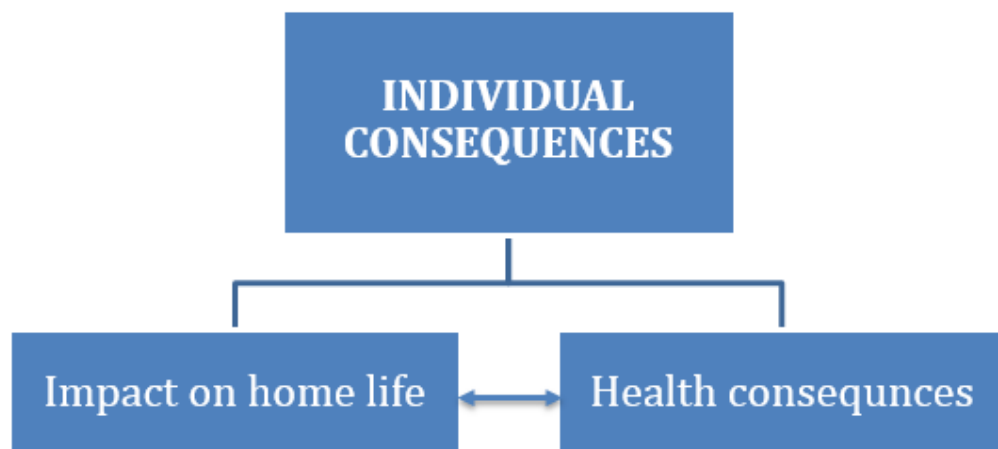


Figure 32: Individual consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia

IMPACT ON HOME LIFE

In line with the literature reviewed (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Shin & Jung, 2014), the majority of participants interviewed for this study identified bullying to have a negative impact on home life. It was reported that such impact was chiefly in the form of adverse effect on the participants' family life at home. While highlighting the negative impact on home life, participants primarily admitted taking out their stress,

due to being bullied at the workplace, on their family members. One professional member of staff stated:

“My children suffered for it. Family life was disturbed. Because you know you just go home stressed, you carry the stress from work to home then. It was a very stressful time.” (Professional staff #2, female)

While the individual quoted above indicated how stress from work gets carried forward to home, similar observations were also made by other participants in this study. For instance, another professional member of staff admitted:

“I became very emotional at home and very stressed. I became very unhappy at home. I was very stroppy at home, very miserable, right down to my family saying to me “you’ve got to leave” on several occasions. It had quite a profound effect on me.” (Professional staff #30, female)

The above extract illustrates how workplace bullying not only adversely affects the victim’s home life, but also possibly causes some stress for the victims’ family members. This view was echoed by other participants as well. A professional staff member described how bullying led to her inactive participation in family life at home:

“I go home and I start crying like [sic]. My partner, he didn’t know what to do and then you know I didn’t have any desire to do anything. It badly affected my family life. I didn’t want to do anything around the house because I would come home exhausted from dealing with the bully, so I’ve got no motivation to do nothing. So yeah, it’s very frustrating, it really is.” (Professional staff #29, female)

The above data extracts indicate that victims felt miserable at work due to bullying, and carried their unhappiness with them into their personal lives as well. This negatively affected their interactions with their family members, especially the children. Victims reported bullying’s negative impact to be so intense, that it was even observed by their family members; who even urged them to leave the job, which was giving them such extreme stress. This aspect has been explored further in the next section on health consequences.

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Researchers (e.g. Park & Ono, 2016) have consistently highlighted the negative consequences of workplace bullying on an individual’s psychological and physical health. Most of participants in this study also reported a number of health consequences they suffered due to being bullied at the workplace. In line with the literature (e.g. Han & Ha, 2016), the consequences identified were divided into psychological and physical consequences, which have been explored below.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The psychological consequences suffered by individual victims (Nielsen, Mageroy, Gjerstad, & Einarsen, 2014), was a major theme that emerged from the data collected from the professional staff. The loss of self-confidence and esteem, stress, emotional disturbance, depression and adverse mental health were the most reported psychological consequences of bullying. Out of these, it was found that loss of self-confidence and stress were the most commonly experienced psychological consequence suffered by the victims, consistent with the findings of Laschinger and Nosko (2015). A professional staff described her experience of bullying:

“It just became an impossible situation for me. It did, it [bullying] impacted my whole sense of wellbeing, it undermined my confidence, it made me feel like I was not able to do even the most trivial of things properly.” (Professional staff #12, female)

While the above statement highlighted the stress and the level of damage caused by bullying to the victim’s level of self-confidence, they were other participants also who similarly reported increased levels of stress due to being bullied. For instance, a professional member of staff stated:

“It was quite stressful because, it [bullying] really made you think that may be you weren’t that good. That was pure stress like when I get stressed I start feeling

really nauseous and I was so stressed it went beyond nausea into actual throwing up.” (Professional staff #4, female)

The above data extract demonstrated that bullying at work caused the victim to experience extreme stress. Psychological aspects, like stress, might have affected the victim physically too (i.e. throwing up). It was also found that this stress was related to victims being made to feel worthless in their working capacities. Participants in this study observed that bullying at work made them question their own abilities, causing stress. It is also indicated that victims also suffered from physical illness caused due to stress; an aspect which has been reported later in the section on health consequences.

A positive psychological impact (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007) pointed out by few participants in this study was that bullying experiences inspired them to turn into stronger individuals, similar to the findings of Maidaniuc-Chirilă (2015) and Heugten (2012). This was attributed to the victims realising that they were bullied not because of any aspect at their end, but because of the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator. A professional member of staff commented:

“We can get up in the morning knowing that we are better people for our experiences [bullying] and we never want them to happen to anyone else as they happened to us.” (Professional staff #2, female)

Similar views were also expressed by other participants, like this professional staff member who contended:

“How it [bullying] changes you in the future, I think in one way if you can live through it and breath through it and keep working your way through it, you recognise those behaviours now much more quickly. So when I went to another organisation and I recognised instantly this woman’s behaviour, I was able to put in place checks to stop it happening and I cut her down very quickly. Nip it in the bud right from the word go.” (Professional staff #26, female)

The above data extracts illustrates how certain individuals derived strength from having survived bullying at work. Apart from developing into stronger individuals, participants also admitted that previous bullying experiences made them more aware of identifying this behaviour in the future. This study also found that the individuals who claimed to have become stronger due to bullying, also became more pro-active towards classifying such behaviour as bullying and stepping in when they saw others being bullied.

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

The professional staff interviewed for this study reported to have suffered from a range of physical health conditions due to workplace bullying, consistent with the findings of O'Driscoll et al. (2016). Sleep disturbance, general anxiety and general ill health were the most reported physical health consequences. A number of participants admitted to have suffered from multiple health consequences at the same time. Sleep disturbance due to workplace bullying was however found to be the most commonly suffered physical health consequence due to bullying. A professional staff member stated:

“I couldn’t sleep at night for worrying about stuff and it [bullying] had that kind of impact. So yes, medication was involved.” (Professional staff #7, female)

It is evident that individual victims experienced such severe stress from being bullied at work, that the resultant worry had a toll on their sleeping patterns. A more descriptive explanation of the level of impact bullying had on an individual’s sleep, was provided by another professional staff member, who contended:

“So, I went to the doctor. They were really concerned about me. I couldn’t sleep properly, I had to go on sleeping pills. I had sleep disorders, panic attacks, I pretty much had insomnia for about six months after that and I had to go to a sleep counsellor because it was so bad it was one hour’s sleep a night.”
(Professional staff #29, female)

Similar observations were also made by other participants, highlighting sleep disturbances as one of the major physical health consequence due to workplace bullying. For instance, a professional member of staff remarked:

“Sleep disorders, yes, I couldn’t sleep because I was so anxious. I used to lie awake at night thinking “oh, that <name of the alleged perpetrator>, blah, blah, blah [sic].” (Professional staff #13, female)

The above data extracts highlighted how workplace bullying negatively affected an individual's victim physical health. This study also found that individuals suffering from physical health consequences due to bullying, used medication and services by relevant health professionals to help their situation.

5.3.2 WORK CONSEQUENCES

Literature (e.g. Park & Ono, 2016) suggests that bullying results in negative consequences for the workplace. The professional staff interviewed for this study reported that bullying negatively affected their performance at their jobs, resulting in lower levels of staff engagement and productivity, as depicted in the figure below (Figure 33).

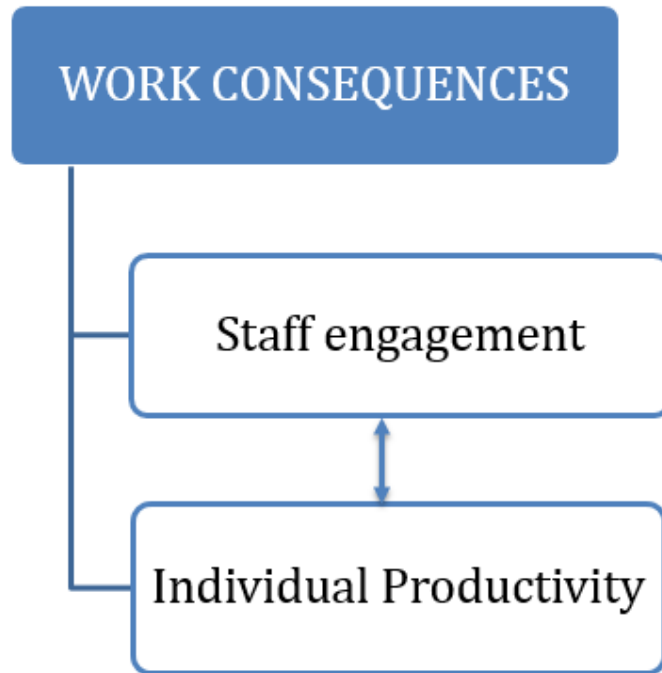


Figure 33: Work consequences of bullying in Australian academia

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

It was found that bullying affected individuals' working capacities in two interrelated ways. Firstly, this study found that workplace bullying reduced the level of staff engagement. Consistent with the views of Hollis (2015), bullied individuals in this study also reported to have lost interest in their jobs and used to dread coming to work.

A professional staff member recalled her experience of being bullied:

“It was just horrible going into work every day. I was dreading going into work every day. I did. I hated going into work. Yes I hated it. It was awful and I never thought I would feel that way, never ever have I felt that way in the past.”

(Professional staff #2, female)

While the individual quoted above highlighted how workplace bullying may result in reducing staff engagement, similar views were also echoed by other participants. For instance, a professional member of staff contended:

“I would dread going to the workplace a lot ... it's the fear of what would happen when I went to my workplace, the constant feeling of fear for so long. I would actually dread the building itself, like almost walking into the building.”

(Professional staff #6, female)

The above statement is indicative of how the victims felt helpless in being bullied, to such an extent that they stopped looking forward to even going for their jobs. It may

be contended that such low levels of staff engagement not only effected the victims of workplace bullying, but also other co-workers, who witnessed the behaviour; possibly resulting in an adverse work environment for the organisation as a whole.

INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTIVITY

In line with the views of Skinner et al. (2015), low level of staff engagement may also have resulted in a subsequent loss of productivity. This study found that individuals who were allegedly bullied at the workplace, were not able to contribute their best to the job, which may have reduced their levels of output. Such reduced levels of output may have subsequently effected the productivity of the workplace as a whole.

A professional staff member recalled the experience of her and her co-worker being bullied:

“It became that we potentially could have been unproductive because this whole thing of being bullied (sic) was consuming us.” (Professional staff #30, female)

Similar views were also highlighted by other participants in this study. Underlining how bullying resulted in making her less industrious, another professional staff member contended:

“It [bullying] was just getting worse and worse. She [alleged perpetrator] told me I was useless, so I felt I was useless and so I did do useless things basically [sic]. I did start making mistakes.” (Professional staff #2, female)

The above statements indicates that bullying may cause victims to possibly underperform at their jobs, potentially creating a vicious cycle of abuse and undue attention. Victims reported bullying to be so intense that it may have completely engulfed their psyche to such a level where they may not have been able to fully concentrate at their work. It may be contended that bullying may lead victims to lose interest in their jobs and possibly become involuntarily unproductive, as all the time they were stressing about being bullied.

5.3.3 ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Literature (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011b; Hurley et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014) consistently highlights how the organisations suffer from various negative consequences due to workplace bullying. Data collected from professional staff indicated towards certain implicit consequences that workplace bullying had for the organisation as a whole. In consistency with the academic staff interviewed for this study, the professional staff also did not directly quote any organisational consequences, although these could be inferred from the interview data. It may contended that victims of workplace bullying were so adversely affected by the behaviour that they did not find it necessary to directly reflect on how such behaviours may have negatively affected the organisations as a whole. Nonetheless, the researcher was able to interpret certain organisational consequences due to workplace bullying, which the participants had indirectly indicated during the interviews. Aligning with the framework of consequences due to workplace bullying by Bartlett and Bartlett (2011), outlined in chapter two; these inter-related consequences were categorised as absenteeism, turnover, productivity and reputation, as depicted in the figure below (Figure 34).



Figure 34: Organisational consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia

Absenteeism: Literature reviewed for this study (e.g. Francioli, Høgh, et al., 2015; Neall & Tuckey, 2014) widely acknowledges absenteeism as a major consequence which an organisation faces due to workplace bullying. Professional staff interviewed for this study also contended that they sought ways and means to avoid working with the alleged perpetrators, even at the cost of taking formal leave on different pretexts. Such absence from work due to bullying indicates how such behaviour may have led to increased levels of absenteeism in the higher education institutions. It also highlights how adversely workplace bullying may have impacted the victims, to the point of their not wanting to come for work; an aspect which has been reported earlier in this chapter.

Turnover: Researchers (e.g. Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2016; Glambek et al., 2014) contend that workplace bullying often leads to victims leaving their jobs, which subsequently increases the organisations' turnover. A majority of participants in this study also reported that bullying resulted in victims leaving their jobs. This led the universities to suffer from a high turnover of employees, causing loss of valuable human resources. It was found that employees targeted with bullying became apprehensive of continuing work in such hostile environments; leading them to leave the organisation. Such high employee turnover not only resulted in loss of skilled staff, but also in the potential loss of corporate knowledge which went with these workers. Some participants also indicated that universities chose to ignore the occurrence of bullying, despite being aware of it, due to the value it attached to the alleged perpetrator; an aspect that has been reported earlier in this chapter.

Productivity: Researchers (e.g. Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Einarsen et al., 2016) contend that workplace bullying indirectly leads to a decrease in the organisations' productivity. Professional staff interviewed for this study also stated their inability to deliver their optimum level of outputs, due to being bullied at work. A majority of participants reported to be so much stressed due to bullying, that they could not fully concentrate on their work tasks. This resulted in adversely affecting the organisations' overall productivity, as these professional staff were responsible for providing auxiliary and support services, not only to the students, but also to the academics. In this way, bullying of professional staff may also have indirectly resulted in adversely impacting the academic staff's productivity as well.

Reputation: It is widely acknowledged in the research community (e.g. Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Neall & Tuckey, 2014) that organisations need to initiate steps to prevent workplace bullying, as it not only negatively impacts the affected workers, but also damages organisations' reputation in the general public. Some participants in this study also observed that bullying had indirectly resulted in damaging the university's overall image among the general public. This in turn may have impacted on the universities' ability to attract good students and staff. It was found that this damage could be accredited to the ill-repute which the university earns, when the victims spread a negative word around in general public, through their own social circles. It may be suggested that such negative word of mouth spread by the victims about the university having a bullying environment, might also prevent future students from applying to study at the university. This aspect may result in decreasing the future student enrolments. The reputation of being a bullying-prone workplace may also rob the universities of chances of employing skilled people and good talent, as its negative image may dissuade potential employees from applying to work at these institutions.

5.3.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - RESEARCH QUESTION #3

The final research question explored the different consequences that workplace bullying had in Australian academia in WA. The consequences reported in this study were divided into individual, workplace and organisational consequences, for academic as well as professional staff. For the latter, individual consequences included impact on home life (Shin & Jung, 2014) and negative health consequences (Han & Ha, 2016). Professional staff in this study reported reduced staff engagement and the subsequent loss in productivity as major workplace consequence due to bullying (Park & Ono, 2016). Increased absenteeism (Francioli, Høgh, et al., 2015), turnover (Einarsen et al., 2016), decreased productivity (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011) along with

damage to universities' reputation (Keashly & Neuman, 2010) were the major organisational consequences of bullying. It may be summarised that the inter-relationship between these factors in turn might create a 'vicious cycle' (Sonntag, 2015, p. 538) for organisations, which may only be curtailed by ameliorating workplace bullying.

This chapter reported the findings from the professional staff in context of this study's research questions. Data was analysed and coded in accordance with this study's theoretical framework, which led to themes being identified regarding the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying. The resultant findings were outlined on the basis of this study's research questions. The findings for first question focused on the nature of bullying and identified different behaviours that were classed as bullying by the participants. While academic staff only identified ongoing behaviour as bullying, the professional staff also highlighted singular incidents as bullying based on the behaviour's severity. The findings for second question explored the influencing factors of bullying and, in concurrence with this study's theoretical framework, classed them into organisational external and internal factors, as well as individual factors. Highlighting the lack of policy on the organisational level, both academic and professional staff underlined the need for a robust anti-bullying policy framework in their universities. Findings for third question identified the different consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia, and categorised them into individual, work and organisational consequences. Most of this study's academic and professional staff participants admitted to have suffered multiple psychological as well as physical health consequences of bullying. Some of the above findings were supported by the literature reviewed for this study, while a few differed, an aspect which has been deliberated further in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

This chapter critically examines the findings of workplace bullying experiences of Australian academic and professional staff. Aligning with this study's framework, the chapter discusses and analyses the study's three research questions by outlining and analysing the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying within Australian academia. No known comprehensive multi university study of workplace bullying in Australian academia has been conducted. This study uniquely contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring workplace bullying in the context of Australian academia. Apart from reporting the known aspects of bullying, this study is distinct in that it found some largely unexplored facets of this behaviour such as instances of upward bullying and the positive transformation of the victim into a stronger individual post the bullying experience. These and other sector-specific aspects have been analysed further in this chapter. The chapter ends by bringing together the study's key findings into a diagram which depicts the overarching influence of New Public Management and the interplay of the reported organisational as well as individual factors in workplace bullying scenarios. The main limitations for this exploratory study have also been noted at the end of this chapter.

This study thematically analysed the participants' experience of workplace bullying through data collected by semi-structured interviews with academic and professional staff in the Australian higher education sector. Although there has been some research on this behaviour in academia in other countries (e.g. Giorgi, 2012; Metzger, Petit, & Seiber, 2015; Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013), the domain remains largely unexplored in the Australian context. This study therefore provides a new perspective about how

workplace bullying unfolds in the higher education sector. This study also provides insights into the bullying experiences of two distinct work-streams of academics and professional staff, analysing how the two groups may differ in their experiences of bullying based on different contextual factors such as the nature of their work. This study's interviewees reported their experiences of workplace bullying in the public universities in WA, underlining its widespread implications for the sector as well as the wider community. This chapter is based on this study's three research questions. Discussion and analysis of each research question in this chapter begins with a brief restatement of findings common to both the academic and professional staff; then proceeds to any findings specific to academic or professional staff. This study's data analysis is based primarily on the victim's perspective; but does address accounts of witness perspectives, which is also largely unexplored in the context of Australian academia. The viewpoints of victims and witnesses therefore shape this study's findings. As this study is based on victim and witness accounts of bullying, these perspectives may not necessarily be in concurrence with those of the alleged perpetrators, who may have viewed their own behaviours differently. Future studies could be undertaken to explore how individuals accused of bullying may view their own actions, providing a different perspective of this behaviour.

6.1 RESEARCH QUESTION # 1: THE NATURE OF BULLYING

The first research question concerned the nature of workplace bullying in Australian academia. This study's two major findings for this question related to the attributes that participants used to describe the nature of bullying and the specific behaviours they identified.

6.1.1 THE NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOR

Salin (2015) contends that workplace bullying has many different aspects, such as subjectivity and frequency. As summarised below in Figure 35, while both academic and professional staff commented on the subjective nature of bullying, along with its frequency and directionality; only professional staff reported singular incidents of bullying based on severity. Gray (2015) states that professional staff are more closely monitored in their daily work routines, in contrast with academic staff, providing numerous occasions for singular incidents to occur. It is contended that such singular interactions may sometimes be perceived by them as bullying. Chan-Mok, Caponecchia, and Winder (2014) further add that individuals' perception of workplace bullying is primarily based on the behaviour's intensity and impact. As discussed further in this section, participants in this study also labelled a singular incident as bullying based on its severity; demonstrating how a standalone incident can severely impact an individual. This aspect has not yet been reported in literature in the context of Australian academia and the finding is unique to this study. Consequently, consideration of single but severe incidents should be included in bullying behaviour and its remedies.

THE NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOUR

Common findings	Findings specific to Professional staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subjectivity• Frequency• Directionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severity

Figure 35: The nature of workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector

COMMON FINDINGS

Subjectivity, frequency and directionality of workplace bullying were commonly reported by both the academics and professional staff who participated in this study. Although these findings are consistent with recent research (e.g. Morris, 2016; Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2016; Samnani, 2013b) on workplace bullying in work-settings other than academia, this study reports these aspects in the context of Australian higher education sector. Similar to higher education sectors globally, the Australian higher education sector is also currently facing a lot of financial pressures resulting in a highly competitive and uncertain environment. These scenarios, coupled with the implementation of NPM practices may provide enabling circumstances for workplace bullying to occur. The nature of bullying in Australian academia is analysed below.

SUBJECTIVITY

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is general consensus among researchers (e.g. Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Pilch & Turska, 2015) that workplace bullying is a

subjective behaviour. Highlighting this aspect, Nielsen and Knardahl (2015) hold that the behaviour's perception varies from one individual to another. This study took into account the views of academic and professional staff, who although being in the same higher education sector, added their own distinct interpretations of bullying. Two different aspects of subjectivity were commonly reported in this study by both the academics and professional staff, in the context of the four Western Australian public universities. Most participants underlined the role of intention and described bullying as being difficult to prove. These aspects have been analysed below.

ROLE OF INTENTION

This study highlighted the importance victims gave to an individual's intention, while identifying a behaviour as workplace bullying. For most of the participants in this study, it was the victims' perception that defined behaviours as bullying and not the intentions of the alleged perpetrators; findings consistent with the views of Rooyen and McCormack (2013) and Giorgi (2010). This study also found that the level of impact bullying had on the victims shaped their perception of the behaviour as bullying. While Florriann and Seibel (2016) and Nielsen and Knardahl (2015) have also highlighted the role of intention in workplace bullying scenarios, previous research (e.g. Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) also indicates that labelling a behaviour as bullying largely depends upon how individuals perceive such behaviours.

Similar viewpoints are also accorded from a legal perspective. The Australian House of Representative Committee's 2012 Inquiry into workplace bullying and the amended "*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*" 2014) stated that it is the victim's perception which

determined whether the behaviour constituted bullying, irrespective of the alleged perpetrator's intention. This approach reinforces that both legislative statutes and researchers in the field attach importance to the role of victim's perception in identifying behaviours as bullying; as also found by this study in the Australian higher education sector. Although the amended *Fair Work Act 2014* had just come into effect when data was collected for this study, substantial media and academic attention had already been centred on its potential impact in ameliorating workplace bullying. This study found that individuals working in a university, whether an academic or a professional staff, did not draw any reference to the current legislation regarding bullying. This finding suggests that either there may not be sufficient awareness about the laws, or people tend to define bullying from their own perspective, as also contended by Einarsen and Nielsen (2015), rather than from a legislative point of view. In view of this study's findings, it is contended that such ambiguities in defining bullying may often result in the behaviour to continue unchecked in Australian academia in particular and organisations in general.

DIFFICULT TO PROVE

Participants in this study underlined bullying behaviour as being difficult to prove to relevant authorities. Recent research (e.g. Ryan, 2016) also points at the difficulty individual victims face in proving bullying. Both academic and professional staff reported the complex nature of workplace bullying which made it difficult for them to support their case against the behaviour. Being difficult to prove, participants often found themselves helpless while trying to even categorise the behaviour as bullying. This finding is consistent with the views of other researchers (e.g. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011b; Gaffney et al., 2012), who also highlight the difficulty in proving bullying. As discussed later in this chapter, finding the behaviour difficult to

prove also deterred most of the participants from seeking formal redress in the matter; an observation similar to that of Hanley and O'Rourke (2016). Subtlety of the behaviour was one of the major aspects which participants in this study found to have led to difficulty in proving bullying. For example, a professional staff participant specifically stated how the subtle nature of the bullying made it harder for her to pinpoint bullying. Similar views were highlighted across the interviews conducted with academic as well as professional staff. While strongly supporting this view, Fox and Stallworth (2005), and Gardner et al. (2016), found that it is this complex nature of the behaviour, which makes it difficult for the victim to categorically pin it down as bullying. Karpinski, Dzurec, Fitzgerald, Bromley, and Meyers (2013) found the subtle nature of bullying allowed the alleged perpetrators to disguise their behaviour in a way that victims find it hard to pinpoint.

The workforce in the Australian higher education sector is well educated (Gray, 2015). Fogg (2008) found the higher education workforce tended to be more underhanded in their behaviour; and this characteristic translated to deviousness when engaging in bullying (Lester, 2013). The ambiguous nature of bullying makes it difficult for the victim to prove its occurrence (Gaffney et al., 2012). Although the amended *Fair Work Act 2014* provides a definition of workplace bullying, this study also found that most workers in the Australian higher education sector may continue with the behaviour in subtle ways; thus compounding the difficulty faced by the victims in proving workplace bullying. While Skinner et al. (2015) also held similar views, their study did not take into account the influence of the amended legislation. This study also found that alleged perpetrators often resorted to sly behaviours in order to bully an individual, for example social exclusion which may not be easy to prove. Although

similar views have also been reported by other researchers (e.g. Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2016; Hassan, Al Bir, & Hashim, 2015), these studies have been conducted outside Australia and in contexts other than academia. This study's findings therefore demonstrates how certain bullying behaviours reported in other contexts, like in studies on public sector (e.g. Bradbury & Hutchinson, 2015), may also be present in Australian academia. These behaviours are discussed in detail further in this chapter.

FREQUENCY

A strong theme that emerged in this study was the frequency of the behaviour which led the study participants to identify it as bullying. While most of the interviewees discussed the ongoing nature of bullying, some professional staff members also talked about a one-off but a significant incident. Singular incidents as bullying has been discussed later in the section on severity. In line with most of the literature on workplace bullying (e.g. Branch & Murray, 2015; Devonish, 2013), all the academic staff and most of the professional staff regarded bullying as an ongoing behaviour. Most of the participants in this study stated that the behaviour was ongoing for an extended period of time but opted not to specify a particular timeframe for the behaviour. The few reported specific timeframes ranged from six months to two years. For example, a professional staff member reported bullying to have continued for around six months, while another stated the duration as going on for two years, highlighting the varied length of the ongoing behaviour.

Most researchers (e.g. Caponecchia & Wyatt, 2009; Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2009; Zapf & Einarsen, 2001) agreed that behaviour needs to be more than a solitary act to

be classed as bullying; and attributed different time durations (Hogh et al., 2016), for example weekly and more (Leymann, 1996) to six months or more (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001). Others researches such as Vartia and Leka (2011), and Morris (2016), did not specify a time but contended that the behaviour needs to be continuous to be classified as bullying; aligning with the views of various other researchers in the field (e.g. Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2016; Samnani, 2013a). It may indeed be contended that it was the continuity of the behaviour, which made most of the workers in the Australian academia classify the behaviour as bullying. A new finding in this study, however, was the reporting of singular incidents as bullying by the professional staff, which has not yet been found in any known studies conducted on workplace bullying in academia. This aspect has been analysed further in the section on severity.

The ongoing nature of workplace bullying is not only highlighted by the researchers (e.g. Hurley, Hutchinson, Bradbury, & Brwone, 2016), but also features in the behaviour's legal definition (Hanley & O'Rourke, 2016). As discussed in this study's literature review, the current Australian legislation ("*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*," 2014) also outlines bullying to be an ongoing behaviour; an aspect which is also incorporated in the definition of workplace bullying by WorkSafe Western Australia Code of Practice (2010). While this study reaffirmed the importance laid upon the continuity of the behaviour identified as bullying, it further underlined the difficulty in proving the behaviour. From this study's data, it appears that difficulty in proving bullying may also lead individuals in the Australian academia to focus on the behaviour's continuity as a key factor to label the behaviour as bullying; an aspect not reported in literature.

DIRECTIONALITY

Researchers (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011b; Hodgins, MacCurtain, & Mannix-McNamara, 2014) contend that workplace bullying can occur downwards (superior to subordinate), upwards (subordinate to superior) and horizontally (peer to peer). Aligning with the literature, this study also found instances of upward and downward bullying. None of the participants in this study, however reported having experienced or witnessed any instance of horizontal bullying in their universities, which may be due to pre-defined power differentials. While structure and power differentials influence the occurrence of upward and downward bullying in hierarchical organisations such as universities (Apaydin, 2012), horizontal bullying is often reported in organisations with flatter organisational structures (Cicerali & Cicerali, 2016). Although literature (e.g. Shabazz, Parry-Smith, Oates, Henderson, & Mountfield, 2016) suggests that upward bullying is not generally reported, some participants in this study did share their experiences of upward bullying, providing a novel perspective on this behaviour. This finding is contrary to most literature, especially in the context of the higher education sector, as participants in this study not only reported upward bullying, but also underlined how subordinates may gather enough clout to allegedly bully their superiors.

Hollis (2015), and Adewale and Elumah (2015), contend that it is the organisational structures in higher education institutions which provide the enabling circumstances for bullying to occur. A common feature across the academic and professional staff interviewed for this study was the downward nature of bullying, wherein an individual at a lower organisational level is allegedly bullied by an individual at a higher position. Responses across the interviews conducted for this study affirmed this view. For

instance, a professional staff member even identified her supervisor's manager as the alleged perpetrator of bullying. None of the literature reviewed put forward any instances of downward bullying by supervisors who are a level above the victim's line-manager. Such bullying from a super-boss may even limit the level of support the victims may get from their immediate line manager who may not want to get involved due to the power differential. Most researchers (e.g. Forssell, 2016; Hoel & Beale, 2006) state that bullying most commonly occurs between a supervisor and subordinate. While echoing similar views, Hodgins, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara (2014), and Tsuno and Kawakami (2015), state that such downward bullying between individuals stems from the organisational hierarchies. This study also found that rigid structures in higher education institutions played a major role in the incidence of bullying; an aspect which is discussed further in this chapter.

As outlined in chapters 4 and 5, some academics and professional staff participating in this study reported having experienced upward bullying; wherein they alleged being bullied by their subordinates. This is a significant finding, given the largely unexplored nature of upward bullying. The alleged perpetrators of upward bullying may be individuals who have been in the organisation for a longer time than their victims. While more incidences of upward bullying may have occurred in academia, they may not have been reported as bullying and hence not recorded. Upward bullying may generally not be brought to notice (Rayner & Cooper, 2003; Shabazz et al., 2016); as victims may perceive such reporting may put a question mark on their leadership skills, when they are vulnerable enough to be bullied by their subordinates. Acknowledging this aspect, Salin (2003b) and Thirlwall (2015) suggested that subordinates, either individually or in groups (Shabazz et al., 2016), can muster

enough power to bully their superior (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011a), generally in a subtle manner (Nicholls, 2015). Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, and Vartia (2003), supported this view, while others (e.g. Rayner & Cooper, 2003) found upward bullying to exist but rarely reported. This study found workers in the higher education sector may be susceptible to being bullied by their subordinates, a finding similar to Birks, Budden, Stewart, and Chapman (2014). Supporting these views, Nicholls (2015, p. 52) labels such upward bullying as an “invisible intimidation”, which not only impacts the individual line managers being bullied, but also has the potential to adversely affect the organisational productivity. Based on this study’s findings, it is contended that further research needs to be undertaken to specifically explore upward bullying in the higher education sector, as the behaviour may not be commonly brought forth by the victims.

FINDING SPECIFIC TO PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Academic and professional staff differed in what they categorised as bullying. Distinct from academic staff, professional staff participating in this study labelled singular incidents as workplace bullying, based on the severity of the behaviour’s impact. Differences in the nature of work and the workplace conditions applicable to academic and professional staff may influence both, the likelihood of encountering bullying behaviours and the way those behaviours are interpreted and categorised. According to Shin and Jung (2014), and Bexley, Arkoudis, and James (2013), academics generally work independently in close collaboration with others on specific tasks or project and are less subject to daily routine supervision. It is not therefore surprising to find professional rather than academic staff, reporting singular incidents as bullying based on the severity of the behaviour; discussed next in the chapter. Based on this study’s findings, the lower levels of daily routine supervision and the less structured

nature of work could be the reason why the behaviour had to be ongoing, for academics to class it as bullying.

SEVERITY

While severity of workplace bullying behaviour is widely reported in literature (e.g. Florriann & Seibel, 2016), its context in labelling singular incidents as bullying in academia is largely unexplored and is therefore unique to this study. Unlike the academics, the professional staff interviewed highlighted the severity of singular incidents, which led them to label these occurrences as workplace bullying. Such a distinction points out the difference in the perception of bullying amongst the two work streams in the Australian higher education sector. As underlined by Zabrodska, Ellwood, Zaeemdar, and Mudrak (2016), sense making plays a role in the labelling of behaviours as bullying. In the context of this study, professional participants stated that it was the impact these singular incidents have on the victims, which shapes their perception of bullying. For instance, labelling a singular incident as bullying based on the behaviour' severity, a professional participant even narrated how upset she was as a result of the one-off incident. Similar views were also expressed by other participants in this study establishing how the level of impact leads an individual to categorise a behaviour as bullying.

Differing from the conventional view identifying ongoing behaviours as bullying (e.g. Branch & Murray, 2015; Devonish, 2013); some researchers (e.g. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Lee, 2000; Omari, 2007) have long deliberated that singular incidents can also amount to bullying, although in workplaces other than academia. This study's findings present the view of singular incidents being labelled as bullying, although in the context of professional staff in the higher

education sector. Thomas (2010) and Chan-Mok et al. (2014) hold that victims label singular incidents as bullying based on the level of severe impact such behaviours have on them. Differences in job-design may also influence the likelihood of workplace bullying. As discussed in Chapter 2, Oldham and Fried (2016) note that job designs are dependent on both the nature of work and the structure of the organisation, which is hierarchical in universities. Goodboy, Martin, Knight, and Long (2017) link the occurrence of workplace bullying to “Job-Demand-Control” model (Karasek Jr, 1979, p. 288), which outlines that the nature of work may determine how workers may react to different workplace behaviours. The type of work, the demands it places on the workers and the level of control exercised by the line management over its employees, shapes the nature of work. Professional staff in Australian universities often work under daily close supervision. According to Jung and Shin (2015), such close monitoring may allow more scope of regular interactions with others. This study found that some of these routine events could singularly be classed as bullying by the professional staff, depending upon the impact.

This study also found that the majority of literature (e.g. Hoel et al., 2001; Morris, 2016; Vartia & Leka, 2011) and current legislation (*"Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth),"* 2014) only label ongoing behaviours as bullying. If literature and legislative policies only state ongoing behaviours as bullying, individuals may feel discouraged to report singular incidents, however devastating; as they are made to believe that singular incidents do not constitute bullying. Such views are also concurrent with New Zealand’s guidelines on workplace bullying (Darby & Scott-Howman, 2016), wherein a singular incident is not considered bullying but is said to have the potential to escalate as bullying. This study, however, found that professional staff in higher

education institutions, did view singular incidents of a severe nature as workplace bullying. Further studies, however, could be conducted to explore the perception of academic staff with regards to labelling singular incidents as bullying.

6.1.2 BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

As shown in Figure 36, some bullying behaviours were commonly reported by both academic and professional staff, while others were specific to only one of these groups. These commonalities and differences are explored in more detail in the next few sections.

BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Common findings	Findings specific to Academics	Findings specific to Professional staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal acts• Manipulation• Victimisation• Social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Micro-management

Figure 36: Bullying behaviours in Australian higher education sector

COMMON FINDINGS

Academics and professional staff participating in this study commonly identified *verbal acts*, *manipulation*, *victimisation* and *social exclusion* as the key bullying behaviours. Each of these behaviours are analysed in more detail below.

VERBAL ACTS

Most participants identified verbal acts of the alleged perpetrators, which they classified as bullying. While academic staff only labelled the spreading of rumours as a verbal act which amounted to bullying, professional staff were more specific in their description. Professional staff identified abuse and threat as the major verbal acts, which they considered as bullying. While Einarsen et al. (2011a) highlighted the spreading of rumours, Dzurec (2016) identified abuse and Nielsen, Einarsen, Notelaers, and Nielsen (2016) categorised threat as bullying. Professional staff participants across this study highlighted how they could apprehend an element of threat in the alleged perpetrator's behaviour which they identified as bullying. Apart from verbal threats, participants in this study reported rumours being spread about them; a behaviour they termed as bullying. The spreading of rumours was chiefly aimed at maligning the image of the victims, ultimately destroying their standing in the work group. Spreading of rumours turned out to be most common amongst academics, as professional image among the peer group hold high value in academic circles which made alleged perpetrators target victims by slandering an individual's image by rumours. Along with highlighting spreading of rumours as a bullying behaviour, this finding also underlines the importance academics attach to their professional image amongst their peers in the workplace.

Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher (2009), and Einarsen et al. (2011b), also identified verbal acts like spreading rumours, as a major bullying action, which not only caused daily stress to the victims; but also resulted in psychological damage in the long run (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015). This view is also consistent with the findings of Elliott and Harris (2012), who highlighted verbal acts as one of the most commonly reported

bullying behaviours. This study, however, found that the verbal acts directed at the professional staff mainly included the threat towards the victims' employability, pointing to the lack of job security in the higher education sector. Such views were not only held by the victims, but also bystanders who had witnessed the behaviour. For example, a professional staff shared his experience of witnessing his co-worker being threatened with continued employment. While Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) also had acknowledged verbal threats as a major bullying action, this study found that such a threat primarily stemmed from intimidating the victims about their job security. Such experiences reported in this study hint at how job insecurity in Australian academia in the backdrop of New Public Management (NPM) practices may allow bullying behaviours to continue unchecked. The aspect of job insecurity in the Australian higher education sector has been discussed further in the section on employment patterns. While this study noted job insecurity to fester workplace bullying, it also implies how applying NPM theory in academia may create an environment which triggers workplace bullying.

MANIPULATION

Manipulation by the alleged perpetrator was another bullying behaviour found common among the academic and professional staff who participated in this study. Other researchers (e.g. Hutchinson, 2013; Treadway, Shaughnessy, Breland, Yang, & Reeves, 2013) have also identified manipulation as a bullying behaviour. Various forms of manipulation were identified by this study's participants in the context of Australian academia. While selective application of policies was only highlighted by the academics, the professional staff reported bullying in the form of information being withheld from them by the alleged perpetrator(s); aspects covered later in this chapter. Both academic and professional staff commonly reported undermining behaviour and

being set up for failure, as a form of manipulative behaviour. Based on this study's findings, it is contended that manipulation in the guise of undermining behaviour was primarily aimed at demoralising the victim. This aspect may also be tied to the decreasing level of employee motivation in universities due to undermining behaviour, which may also hamper organisational productivity.

Undermining behaviour, aimed to humiliate an individual, was also found to be another major form of manipulation. Salin (2003) and Hershcovis (2011) also recognised undermining an individual as an act of bullying, which accord with the views purported by the participants of this study. Building upon the studies by Pilch and Turska (2015) and Hutchinson and Jackson (2015), such undermining of an individual may also be a disguised attempt by the alleged perpetrator to bring down the victim's performance which may be a threat to the perpetrator. The aspect of performance has been analysed further in the section on individual factors influencing bullying. Participants in this study also stated that alleged perpetrators set them up for failure in order to bully them. Although this view is supported by Olive and Cangemi (2015), participants in this study specifically contended that by setting the victims up for failure, the alleged perpetrators wanted to prepare grounds for eventually removing these individuals from the organisation. Consistent with the views of Ritzman (2016), this study also found that alleged perpetrators mainly aim at jeopardising victims' professional standing in the workplace by setting them up for failure; consequently threatening their continued job security. Such sentiments were held by many participants in this study, such as the academic staff member who described how the alleged perpetrator made all efforts to make her work-life hard, in order to make her leave the university.

Academics participating in this study found unequal treatment through selective implementation of workplace policies as a manipulative behaviour on the part of the alleged perpetrator aimed at bullying the victim. For instance, one academic described how in an obvious disregard to the organisational policy of equitable treatment, her line manager would urge her to work harder, but silently accept the lack of productivity of others. Hoel and Beale (2006) also identified selective implementation of policies as bullying, supporting this study's findings. Similar views were also echoed by other researchers. For example, Hurley et al. (2016) also found that alleged perpetrators used organisational policies as a tool for bullying others. Based on this study's findings, it may be contended that these were selectively applied only to the victims, and not uniformly across all workers. Describing similar situations, academics participating in this study also reported to have been disadvantaged by such selective application of policies; a behaviour they classed as bullying.

Magee, Gordon, Robinson, Reis, Caputi, and Oades (2015) note withholding information as a form of bullying; this was seen as manipulative behaviour which only the professional staff in this study labelled as bullying. Academics work more independently and are subjected to lower routine monitoring and information flow (Shin & Jung, 2014); while professional staff work more often in a closely knit office environment (Gray, 2015), where having information may be a key to success. This may be a reason why only the professional staff experienced bullying in the form of withholding information, while similar views were not expressed by the academics. The professional staff jobs are more contingent on each other whereas the academics do more stand-alone work, which may be another reason why withholding information was identified as bullying by one group and not the other. While Fox and Stallworth

(2005) also identified withholding information as bullying, Karpinski et al. (2013) argue that such behaviour is mainly subtle in nature; a finding similar to Einarsen et al. (2011b) and Nielsen et al. (2016). Withholding information was also found to be an attempt by the alleged perpetrator to obstruct the victim from successfully accomplishing work tasks with the ultimate aim of bringing down the targeted individual's performance. This study's findings suggest that individuals in the higher education sector may view knowledge as power; and withholding of information may prove to be critical for employees, who are trying to accomplish their work efficiently. In light of this study's findings, it is argued that such hindrance may not only disadvantage individual employees, but may also have a negative impact on universities' overall productivity.

VICTIMISATION

Dzurec (2016) and Hutchinson (2013) identify victimisation as a behaviour aimed to intimidate individuals to the extent that such behaviour may adversely affect their working capacities as well as personal well-being. Participants similarly reported victimisation due to their making complaints against bullying as a further act of bullying; a view also held by Nielsen and Einarsen (2012). Some of the academics and professional staff further reported that victimisation not only deterred them from further pursuing a formal channel of complaint, as also found by Hutchinson (2013); but may also cast doubt on their continued employment. From a legislative point of view, victimisation is also classed as bullying in the *Australian Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act (1986)*. This study found that the fear of being further victimised deterred some of the participants from taking a formal stance against bullying; which in the views of Dzurec (2016), implicitly allows the behaviour to

continue unchecked. It may therefore be contended that such behaviours may become ingrained as well as self-perpetuating in the organisation's culture; often leading to toxic work environments conducive to workplace bullying.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Being socially excluded by the alleged perpetrator was identified by both academics and professional staff as constituting bullying. Francioli et al. (2016) also label social exclusion as one of the prominent forms of workplace bullying, although in a work setting other than academia. This study's findings suggest social exclusion to be an indirect behaviour, which the participants not only labelled as bullying, but also found it hard to prove. It was found that by socially excluding an individual, the alleged perpetrators tried to isolate the victim; a finding similar to Hassan et al. (2015). As observed by Scott, Zagenczyk, Schippers, Purvis, and Cruz (2014), workers in an organisation often prefer to have social support from their peers, which helps them to accomplish objectives in a collegial environment. Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, et al. (2016) further contend that socially excluded victims are generally unable to get support from their co-workers, as the alleged perpetrators limit the individual's interaction with others at the workplace. Salin (2003) and Verkuil, Atasayi, and Molendijk (2015) also regard social exclusion as a form of bullying, which may cause severe damage to the victim's mental health; an aspect discussed further in this chapter. In light of this study's findings, universities may wish to consider explicitly recognising social exclusion as a form of bullying, in order to safeguard employees' well-being at work.

FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO ACADEMICS

Distinct from the views expressed by the professional staff, academics in this study labelled alleged perpetrators' interference with the victims' structure of work as bullying behaviour. As discussed in detail below, deliberating on the structure of work, participants reportedly felt bullied by being unfairly managed and given unreasonable workloads, along with attempts to limit the victims' work participation.

STRUCTURE OF WORK

Highlighting the structure of work, academics primarily reported being unfairly managed by their superiors; a behaviour they identified as bullying. Presenting similar views, Boddy (2011, p. 107) labelled such alleged perpetrators as “corporate psychopaths”, whose main objective is to stimulate counterproductive behaviour in the workplace through unfair supervision. Highlighting such behaviours prevalent in Australian higher education sector, this study's academic participants explicitly stated how they felt bullied by being unfairly managed by their supervisors. This study's findings also suggest that such biased behaviour may also stem from individuals feeling threatened by a better performing employee. Performance as a factor influencing workplace bullying has been analysed later in the section on individual factors. It was reported that such unfair treatment stemmed out from the alleged perpetrators treating the victims differently in a negative manner, from others at work. McAvoy and Murtagh (2003) and Boddy (2011), in their research on the subject, also identified unfair management of individuals as a bullying behaviour, supporting this study's findings. While unfair treatment has been highlighted by other researchers like Peng, Chen, Chang, Zhuang, and Nickson (2016) and M. Harvey, Treadway, and Heames (2007), this study in the Australian higher education sector only found

academics reporting unfair treatment and not the professional staff, which can be an area of future research.

It was also found that alleged perpetrators put unreasonable workloads on the victims in order to bully them; ultimately making their working life difficult to the point, when the victim may be forced to quit work. Supporting this view, Berlingieri (2015), and Hurley et al. (2016), contend that the alleged perpetrators' main motive behind such behaviours is to pressurise the victims to such an extent by the workload; that they are forced to think of leaving the organisation. Such circumstances are also fuelled by the advent of NPM in the Australian higher education sector (Favaloro, 2015) that has inadvertently led to an increase in workloads (Desrochers & Kirshstein, 2014; Nicholls, 2014). Such growing workloads may easily play into the hands of the alleged perpetrators, facilitating bullying occurrences, a view also held by Lee Gloor (2014). The level of employment protections provided to ongoing staff in Australian universities (Coates, Goedegeburre, Van Der Lee, & Meek, 2008), often make it difficult to terminate individuals through formal performance management processes. While this view accords with Anderson and Chhiba (2014), this study also found that alleged perpetrators may resort to bullying tactics in order to force victims to leave of their own accord; often amounting to constructive dismissal.

This study further found that alleged perpetrators, through the use of their formal position and influence, instigated others to refrain giving work tasks to the victim. Researchers (e.g. Devonish, 2013; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011) argue that such behaviour is ultimately aimed at reducing the victims' productivity and performance. Alleged perpetrators' power (Ngale, 2016), which stems from

organisational hierarchies in universities (Apaydin, 2012), may also facilitate such limiting of victims' work participation. Consistent with the findings of Baillien, Neyens, and De Witte (2011), it may be suggested that flatter organisational structures may reduce the incidence of workplace bullying. The role of hierarchies and power have been analysed further in the section on influencing factors.

FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO PROFESSIONAL STAFF

As discussed below, professional staff interviewed for this study highlighted micro-management as a key bullying behaviour; a view which was not reported by the participating academics. Such dissimilarity in bullying experiences of academic and professional staff may stem from the difference in their respective nature of work, as explored further below.

MICRO-MANAGEMENT

In line with the findings of Trad and Johnson (2014), participants in this study also contended that they felt bullied by the manner they were micro-managed by the alleged perpetrator. Professional staff reported being subjected to excessive control over their daily work routines, to a level where it prevented them from working efficiently in their jobs; a view also echoed by Farley, Coyne, Sprigg, Axtell, and Subramanian (2015). Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, and Pereira (2002), and Fox and Stallworth (2005) also found micro-management of tasks as a widely reported bullying behaviour aimed at curtailing any autonomy that individuals may have in their job roles; ultimately reducing their decision making capabilities. As observed by Chen and Park (2015), such adverse effect on workers' decision making strength, may also have a negative impact on an organisation's overall productivity. This study found professional staff to be under unwarranted micro-management of their supervisors, a

behaviour the participants identified as bullying. Being subjected to unjustified micro-management, employees may feel being unfairly managed at the hands of the alleged perpetrators, bringing into question organisational policies of equitable treatment. It may be contended that how effective these policies be, when the workplace becomes less secure and in the workers' opinion, less fair.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTION # 2: THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BULLYING IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

The second research question of this study focussed on exploring the different factors that influenced bullying behaviours in Australian academia. The factors that emerged from the findings were categorised into organisational factors and individual factors. Analysis was in line with this study's theoretical framework and accordingly the organisational factors were sub-categorised into external and internal factors. These are analysed in detail below.

6.2.1 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The first major category of factors that emerged from the findings were the external organisational factors that influenced bullying behaviours amongst the academic and professional staff. Analysis of data was undertaken in line with the theoretical framework of this study which led to further classification of these factors into competition, economic and societal factors.

COMPETITION

The first indicator identified by this study's participants was the increased competition that academics and professional staff have within their own work domains. The higher education sector has emerged as a highly competitive field, not only in Australia (Dow,

2014), but around the world (Shin & Jung, 2014). The increased level of competition was reported by this study's participants to form the core part of the prevailing work cultures in the universities, in line with the views of Hollis (2015). Various scholars (e.g. Bosman, Coiacetto, & Dredge, 2011; Favaloro, 2015) link such intensified competitiveness with the advent of NPM, which has led universities to function more as corporate organisations rather than institutions of higher learning. While acknowledging the sector's competitive environment, this study also found that such fierce competition reduces the level of camaraderie amongst the universities' workforce, often resulting in workers competing against each other.

The role of competitive environments in facilitating the occurrence of bullying is also highlighted by Treadway et al. (2013). McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, and Thomas (2008) contended that the competitive environment in the higher education sector may lead to power struggles amongst the workforce, which may trigger bullying behaviours. While supporting similar views, Brown and Hoxby (2015) and Chang (2015) further state that the prevailing economic downturn has adversely effected the Australian higher education sector, resulting in a highly competitive environment ripe for bullying to occur as well as continue, a view also held by Lokuwaduge and Armstrong (2015). Indicating towards competition within organisations as well as between, academics participating in this study highlighted how their universities had become less collegial and egalitarian in the face of rising competition in the higher education sector. Such an environment may not only be conducive to bullying, but may also hamper the quality of teaching and research conducted in these universities. This prevailing competitive environment in the higher education sector can also be linked

to the application of NPM practices in universities, which have led the sector being governed on corporate principles of profitability.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Participants in this study reported economic factors to have played a role in influencing workplace bullying. The changing work environments in the higher education sector, worldwide (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016) and in Australia (Lokuwaduge & Armstrong, 2015), are often the result of universities being run on corporate principles of governance. Economic conditions in the sector are often transformed from the implementation of NPM principles (Favaloro, 2015; Woodhall, Hiller, & Resnick, 2014), which often result in financial limitations in relation to staffing and resources. The first theme that emerged among both academic and professional staff was the prevailing financial constraints in the higher education sector, which facilitated alleged perpetrators to engage in bullying. Participants also reported the employment patterns in academia and the lack of job security or alternative opportunities as factors that also influenced the occurrence of bullying.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Economic factors, in the form of financial constraints in the higher education sector, were reported to be a major external factor which influenced the incidence of bullying. This study reported that budgetary cuts in the sector made the victims wary about formally raising the issue of bullying; as they had witnessed others being made redundant due to financial constraints and did not want to risk their own jobs by making complaints about bullying. In light of such tight financial constraints, victims are more likely to remain silent about being bullied within their workplace. Parker

(2011) and Dow (2014) highlight the recent financial cutbacks in the Australian higher education sector as a major factor that creates an atmosphere of uncertainty. In the light of the Australian federal budget 2017-2018 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), the higher education sector continues to be under financial pressure with \$ 2.9 AUD billion cut from its government funding. Being subjected to 2.5 percent efficiency dividend over the next two years, these cuts will only further pressurise the universities' limited resources; adversely impacting the quality of teaching and research. Australian students' unions, like the National Union of Students (Loussikian, 2017) have also labelled these measures as an 'attack on the nation's future', depicting the detrimental impact these measures may have on the delivery of higher education and the wider community. Apart from terming these damaging budgetary outcomes as regressive for the sector, workers' union such as the National Tertiary Education Union (MacDonald, 2017) contends that these measures may also result in workers feeling less secure about their employment in the sector. This study's findings also suggest that the lack of job security is a function of the economic environment prevalent in the higher education sector. Underlining such sentiments, this study's participants contended how bullying was coupled with uncertainty about continued employment.

As Park and Ono (2016) observe, such uncertainty may prove to be conducive for bullying to occur. Bordia and DiFonzo (2013) also found that financial constraints coerce the employees to silently suffer from bullying behaviours. Supporting this view, McKay et al. (2008) stated that such financial conditions may also trigger extensive competition, enabling the occurrence of bullying. Based on this study's findings, it may be postulated that workplace bullying is not only a result of such fierce

competitiveness in the sector; but the behaviour itself may stem from the uncertainty such competition creates amongst the workforce. Amaral (2003) and Giorgi (2012) pointed out that financial constraints feature extensively in the higher education sector; where both academics and professional staff, in response to the resultant competition, may resort to bullying others; in order to secure their own positions. Echoing similar opinions, Schafferer and Szanajda (2013), and Zabrodska and Kveton (2013), state that higher education institutions around the world have become more susceptible to bullying behaviours, in face of the growing economic constraints. This study further found that such scenarios may often have wider implications for universities in terms of recruitment of potential quality staff; an aspect which has been analysed further in the section on organisational consequences.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS IN ACADEMIA

The employment patterns in the higher education sector's labour market was the second major economic factor highlighted in this study. Sessional employment was reported by academics as being a form of temporary employment, while professional staff stated contractual employment as being temporary. Parker (2011) highlights the large number of workers being employed on a temporary basis in the higher education sector worldwide. A parallel pattern has also been observed in Australian academia (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016; Norton & Cherastidtham, 2014). This study's findings suggest that such contingent employment patterns may also be tied with the resultant job insecurity amongst the sector's workforce, which may also compel victims to silently suffer bullying; allowing the behaviour to continue unchecked.

Zabrodska and Kveton (2013) attribute this rise of temporary employment in the higher education sector to the diminished public funding to the universities. This study found that being employed on temporary basis, individuals were wary of reporting bullying behaviours in case they jeopardise their future employability, a finding similar to Ryan, Burgess, Connell, and Groen (2013). While Bordia and DiFonzo (2013) contend that temporary workers in the higher education sector tend to remain silent about being bullied, this study found that such tolerance towards being bullied stems from job insecurity. Marginson (2008) and Hollis (2015) also observe that the temporary nature of such employment contributes to the occurrence of workplace bullying. This study's findings suggest that reliance on temporary employment in the higher education sector creates a sense of uncertainty amongst this contingent workforce, inciting potential perpetrators to engage in bullying these temporary employees.

LACK OF ALTERNATE EMPLOYMENT

Professional staff interviewed for this study reported the lack of alternate employment as being a major economic factor that influenced the incidence of bullying. This study found that professional staff employed on a contractual basis placed utmost importance on the continuity of employment, as they did not have alternative avenues of work. The advent of NPM has transformed the higher education sector (Woodhall et al., 2014) into a highly competitive setting (Shin & Jung, 2014) which functions on corporate principals of profitability (Favaloro, 2015). Such a competitive sectoral environment (Lokuwaduge & Armstrong, 2015; Schafferer & Szanajda, 2013), coupled with the rise in casual employment (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016; Metzger et al., 2015), may have led to limited alternate employment opportunities within the sector. This lack of alternate employment was

reported to have led victims to silently suffer being bullied, lest they risked their current jobs. This view is also supported by Nielsen and Einarsen (2012) and Høgh, Mikkelsen, and Hansen (2011), although in work-settings other than academia. Acknowledging this aspect, Liefvooghe and Davey (2001) further stated that alleged perpetrators, being aware of the lack of alternate employment for temporary employees, may feel more confident in bullying them. Building upon this view, this study also found that such prevailing employment scenarios in the Australian higher education sector, may make it more prone to workplace bullying.

SOCIETAL ISSUES

Consistent with the views of Costa et al. (2015), and Johnson, Boutain, Tsai, and De Castro (2015), participants in this study also reported that the manner in which bullying is viewed and discussed in societal spheres, influenced how the behaviour was dealt with at different levels of the organisation. This study further found that bullying is a subject which is considered a taboo in university circles. Such views were presented across the interviews conducted with the academic and professional staff. For instance, echoing the opinions held by many other participants, a professional staff explicitly stated how she had never heard a discussion on bullying taking place openly in her university. Such mindsets highlighted by this study's participants indicate how discussing bullying may be considered almost a taboo in Australian universities.

Supporting similar views, Einarsen (2005) and Einarsen et al. (2011a) contended that the taboo around bullying deterred victims from bringing it in open, which led to them silently continue suffering from this behaviour; particularly in a university setting (Kwan, Tuckey, & Dollard, 2016). Building upon this study's findings, it may be recommended that more awareness needs to be spread amongst the universities'

workforce about workplace bullying, so that individuals are more vigilant to identify as well as report such behaviours. As Lester (2013) contends, such awareness may ultimately help in ameliorating bullying; and promoting dignity and respect for all at work (Omari, 2007).

6.2.2 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The second major category of factors that emerged from the findings were the internal factors to the organisation that influenced the bullying behaviours. These factors, in line with the theoretical framework of this study, were further classified into structure, culture, technology and policy. Different sub-themes were identified under these factors; some which were common among the academics and professional staff, while others were more specific to either one of them. These are depicted in the figure below (Figure 37) and explained in the following section.

Internal Organisational factors	Common findings	Findings specific to academics	Findings specific to professional staff
Structure	-Hierarchy		-Divide between professional and academic staff
Culture	- Leadership -Tolerance towards bullying -Role of employees	- Pressure to perform	
Technology (used as a broader term to mean inputs and outputs)		-Lack of trust in university system -Lack of support mechanisms	-Use of emails and the phone
Policy	-Organisational policy on bullying		

Figure 37: Organisational internal factors influencing workplace bullying

STRUCTURE

This study found structural factors to have influenced the occurrence of workplace bullying in the Australian higher education sector. Based on being common to both academics and professional staff, or specific to either; these structural aspects are analysed below.

COMMON FINDING

The hierarchical structures of higher education institutions were reported to be an influencing factor that enabled the occurrence of bullying behaviour, by both academic and professional staff who participated in this study.

HIERARCHY

This study found that rigidity of organisational structures in universities led to power being concentrated with individuals in higher levels; a finding also supported by Hollis (2015). Similar to the views of Apaydin (2012), and Buka and Karaj (2012), participants in this study also reported that hierarchies created power imbalances, which provided a conducive environment for bullying to occur. This study found that such power may also stem from expert knowledge as well position in the organisation. The role of power and its uneven distribution in the higher education sector has been analysed later in the section on individual factors. While McKay et al. (2008) and Keashly and Neuman (2010) stated that strict hierarchical structures in these institutions facilitate potential perpetrators to engage in bullying through well-defined organisational hierarchies, Hollis (2015) termed the university itself as a bully at the organisational level. Other researchers, like D'Cruz and Noronha (2014, p. 3), term such bullying by organisations as “institutional bullying”. In the backdrop of NPM practices, universities are also transforming into matrix organisations (Pinheiro & Stensaker, 2014), where organisational structures may be differently experienced by the academic and professional staff. While academics may adhere to stringent organisational hierarchies, professional staff may be more inclined to abide by the practices of NPM. Such differences in perceiving organisational structures may also have influenced how academic and professional staff may have labelled different behaviours as bullying. In light of this study’s findings, it may be argued that hierarchical organisational structures make higher education institutions more susceptible to bullying. While concerns of hierarchy may seem surprising given the flatter structures associated with NPM, the less secure employment in universities as a result of NPM may exacerbate the power differentials facilitating bullying.

Hierarchy was highlighted by both academic and professional staff as a factor influencing bullying, and no findings were reported being specific only to academic staff.

FINDING SPECIFIC TO PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Professional staff interviewed for this study highlighted the divide between themselves and academic staff as a major structural factor that influenced the occurrence of bullying.

DIVIDE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC STAFF

It was reported that universities' organisational structures gave precedence to academic staff over professional staff, who were perceived by some as auxiliary to academics. As Graham (2012) observes, such precedence may stem from the value universities place on their academic staff. As academic staff are primarily responsible for teaching and research (Bexley et al., 2013), which are universities' main source of income and its core functions; they may view themselves as front-line workforce, supported by the professional staff. Supporting this view, researchers (e.g. Amaral, 2003; Favaloro, 2015; Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012) highlight divisive environments in the higher education sector as a factor that influences workplace bullying. McKay et al. (2008) further contended that such differentials in higher education institutions, based on the nature of work, contribute to bullying scenarios; a view consistent with Gallant (2011). As academic output determines universities' rankings, academic staff may be more likely to get away with bullying because there may be reluctance on the universities' part to acknowledge and address bullying from academics. Similar views are also echoed by Gray (2015), who speculates about how

Australian academics consider themselves superior to professional staff. This study's participants likewise stated that such disparity created a divide among academic staff and professional staff wherein academics, owing to their position in the organisational structure, felt at liberty to bully professional staff. Such hierarchical institutions, as Keashly and Neuman (2010) observes, are often more prone to workplace bullying. This study's findings further imply that the priority given to academics over professional staff in universities may implicitly allow academics to engage in bullying professional staff, without any fear of being reprimanded.

CULTURE

A prominent internal organisational factor that emerged in this study's findings was the culture of the organisation and its various aspects which influenced the occurrence of workplace bullying. Academics and professional staff reported that organisational culture facilitated bullying by providing a favourable environment for individuals to engage in such behaviours. While such views are supported by Einarsen and Nielsen (2015), and Pilch and Turska (2015), this study's findings further contend that organisational culture as a whole, plays an important role in the incidence of workplace bullying. As discussed next, commonalities were reported between the findings from academics and professional staff, with some being specific only to one of them.

COMMON FINDINGS

Academics and professional staff interviewed for this study reported three distinct aspects which resulted in making the universities' culture conducive for bullying to occur as well as continue unchecked. First, participants highlighted the role of leadership in the incidence of workplace bullying which was primarily found to have

ignored the behaviour. Second, this study found widespread tolerance towards workplace bullying in universities. Finally, the role played by employees at different organisational levels in facilitating bullying was stressed upon by the participants. These findings are analysed below.

LEADERSHIP

Organisational leadership was one of the major factors identified by this study's participants which influenced workplace bullying. In line with the views of Catley et al. (2013), and Tsuno and Kawakami (2015), the role of leaders in either accepting or condemning workplace bullying was highlighted by most participants, as influencing the behaviour's occurrence. In instances in which the organisational leadership was reported to be silent about bullying in the universities, it was found that victims perceived these leaders to be more supportive and believing of the alleged perpetrators rather than the victims. For example, a professional staff participant succinctly highlighted how university leadership chose to be a silent spectator to her bullying ordeal; indicating at the leadership's tacit acceptance of the behaviour.

While presenting similar views, Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, and Salvador (2009), and Francioli et al. (2016), commented that it is the leader's response to a bullying situation which determines how the organisation as a whole reacts to the behaviour. Hoel and Beale (2006), and Nielsen (2013), also noted that leaders can themselves be bullies, which transforms the entire organisational culture into being bullying-tolerant. Participants in this study further contended that an anti-bullying stance must trickle down from the top leadership in the universities, as it may be a key to bring about change in organisational culture. As also contended by Laschinger,

Wong, and Grau (2012), leaders often shape an organisation's culture and therefore may play a key role in establishing an anti-bullying work culture. The influence of policies on the incidence of workplace bullying has been discussed further in this chapter.

TOLERANCE TOWARDS BULLYING

Similar to the views of Coyne (2016), participants in this study also reported that tolerance towards the bullying behaviour at the universities' end not only encourages the behaviour; but also results in others assuming bullying to be an accepted norm. This tolerance was also reported to then being engrained in the organisation's culture, wherein academic as well as professional staff were expected to endure being bullied. The lack of effective implementation of anti-bullying policies was also reported to contribute towards such tolerance to bullying. While Hearn and Parkin (2001), and Salin (2003b) found that such tolerance of bullying at the organisational level over a period of time becomes a part of the workplace culture, Vickers (2014) highlighted such tolerance as corrupting the organisational culture. Similar views were also presented by other researchers exploring workplace bullying in the higher education sector, overseas (Fogg, 2008; Keashly & Neuman, 2010) as well as in Australia (Skinner et al., 2015). In light of this study's findings, it is further contended that individuals in such workplaces tend to accept bullying as routine, which encourages potential perpetrators to engage in such behaviours and the victims to remain silent about it.

ROLE OF EMPLOYEES

The role of various employees in influencing the bullying behaviour in universities was highlighted in this study by both academic and professional staff, and is discussed below.

WITNESSES

Participants in this study repeatedly highlighted their co-workers' inability to stop, limit or discourage the bullying behaviour. Although similar findings are widely reported in research (e.g. Chen & Park, 2015; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011) in contexts other than academia, this study's academic and professional staff reported the same phenomenon in the four Western Australian public universities. It was reported that co-workers in higher education institutions who witnessed others being bullied, chose to remain a mute spectator to the situation. Paull, Omari, and Standen (2012, p. 355) accredit such silent witnesses as "avoiding bystanders", who walk away from the situation, without offering any help to the victim.

While expressing similar views, Matthiesen, Einarsen, and Mykletun (2008), and Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, and Rodriguez-Carballeira (2011), further add that bystanders still get passively affected by the bullying behaviour, even though they chose to remain silent about it. Florriann and Seibel (2016) contend that such passive witnessing also lowers job satisfaction among the bystanders; adversely affecting their productivity as well (Chen & Park, 2015). Burnes and Pope (2007) described this passive affect as the increased level of strain that bystanders experience due to seeing another co-worker being bullied. Silence on the part of the bystanders could also be attributed to the power imbalance between the witnesses and the alleged perpetrator, a view also

supported by other researchers (e.g. Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015). In context of the higher education sector, this study further found that bystanders may be wary of interfering, as they would not want to jeopardise their own professional standing and employment. The aspect of power imbalance has been analysed later in the section on individual factors.

ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

Echoing the views of Omari, Paull, D'Cruz, and Guneri (2014), this study's participants also reported that an organisation's response to a bullying situation depended upon how valuable the alleged perpetrator was to the organisation. As similar findings are only reported by a few scholars, this aspect is largely unexplored and can be a future area of research. Given the mostly top-down nature of bullying behaviour (Forssell, 2016), this study found that universities placed more value on the alleged perpetrator over the victim, which led to its inaction to stop workplace bullying. Such value may also stem from the alleged perpetrators' academic output, in terms of high research grants and publications. Based on this study's findings, it may be contended that such individuals may be deemed to be untouchable by the universities, for their value to the organisation. Supporting this view, Sidle (2010), and Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, and Einarsen (2011), stated that when the alleged perpetrator is deemed to be more valuable than the victim, in terms of performance and output, then the organisation chooses to overlook the bullying behaviour, often at a cost to the victims. Consistent with the findings of Omari et al. (2014), such indifference on the organisations' part may lead the victims to perceive themselves being subjected to a different set of rules, in comparison to the alleged perpetrators. This outcome may also result in high employee turnover, which has been discussed further in the section on

organisational consequences. This aspect also accords with recent research on workplace bullying (e.g. Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014) which also ties employee turnover with workplace bullying; strengthening this study's findings.

THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The professional staff interviewed for this study highlighted the lack of support from the universities' Human Resource (HR) department when they sought assistance in dealing with bullying situations. This employee role was specifically cited only by the professional staff, and not by the academic staff. It was reported that universities' HR department neither provided the required support to the victims, nor actively followed up the complaints of bullying. This finding may also indicate the lack of importance the universities place on workplace bullying or that the HR department is ill-equipped to handle such issues. While acknowledging this aspect, Lewis and Rayner (2003), and Harrington, Warren, and Rayner (2015), suggest that such HR departments at times enable the bullying to continue, by not effectively dealing with bullying complaints. Cowan (2012) and D'Cruz and Noronha (2010) contend that such indifferent attitude of HR towards bullying complaints results in victims perceiving HR to be ineffective in dealing with issues like bullying. In the views of D'Cruz, Noronha, and Beale (2014), such inaction on the part of HR results in reducing its credibility among the victims. This study's findings underline how such inappropriate organisational responses to bullying may facilitate the behaviour's occurrence. This outcome in turn possibly deters the victims from approaching HR in the first place for help. In the view of this study's findings, it may be suggested that universities may wish to better equip their HR departments, in terms of personnel and policy, in order to ameliorate workplace bullying.

FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO ACADEMICS

In addition to the above factors, academics participating in this study also highlighted how organisational cultures in universities are characterised by high pressures of performance, as discussed below.

PRESSURE TO PERFORM

Excessive pressure of performance on the academics was an important aspect of organisational culture that was identified in this study as influencing workplace bullying. It was reported that academics were often tasked with increased student loads and the requirement for increased as well as high quality research outputs; while being provided, in their view, minimal resources to accomplish these tasks. Omari, Paull, and Crews (2013) found that such scarcity of resources may often lead individual workers to compete for these limited resources; which may result in bullying situations. Tigrel and Kokolan (2009), and Shin and Jung (2014) acknowledged that extreme pressure of performance not only provides a conducive environment for bullying to occur; but also provides a motive for the potential perpetrators to bully others in order to secure their own positions (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015).

Bosman et al. (2011), and Favaloro (2015), accredit this increased pressure of performance to the implementation of NPM in Australian higher education sector; wherein academics' performance is managed based on corporate lines of output rather than sole scholarly contributions. Dow (2014) and Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (2016) contend that the reduction in commonwealth funding to the Australian higher education domain has also created extreme pressure on the sector's limited resources; resulting in a work environment characterised by high

performance expectations (Chang, 2015), and therefore at times conducive to workplace bullying. Based on this study's findings, it is argued that such excessive pressure creates insecurity amongst the workforce in the higher education sector, providing enabling circumstances for bullying to occur.

TECHNOLOGY

Academic and professional staff identified a range of technological influences on workplace bullying in the Australian higher education sector; discussed below.

FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO ACADEMICS

While the academic staff appeared to have little concern about technological tools such as emails and phones, they were more concerned about the universities' operational systems in place, in terms of processes and support mechanisms. The lack of trust in the university system and dearth of support mechanisms at the university for bullying victims, were two key aspects highlighted by the academic participants and are analysed below.

LACK OF TRUST IN UNIVERSITY PROCESSES

Academic staff who participated in this study identified university systems to have negatively influenced the occurrence of workplace bullying. This study highlighted victims' lack of trust in the university's processes. Subjected to workplace bullying, victims deterred from taking formal channels to seek redress as they perceived the university systems as not being robust enough to resolve such issues; in terms of a thorough investigation and a just outcome. This was more evident in instances where the alleged perpetrator held a much senior position in the university as compared to the victim. While supporting this view, Woodrow and Guest (2014), and Ritzman

(2016), also found that victims often lacked confidence in organisational systems, terming them as ineffective in dealing with workplace bullying. In the Australian context, similar conclusions were also drawn in the recent research on workplace bullying in the country's public sector (e.g. Hurley et al., 2016) and the higher education sector (e.g. Skinner et al., 2015), further strengthening this study's finding. Based on this study's findings, it is contended that such lack of trust in organisational systems not only allows the behaviours to continue unchecked, but also implicitly conveys a lack of concern on the part of the organisation for workers' welfare.

LACK OF SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Academic participants also highlighted a lack of effective support systems available at the universities for the victims of workplace bullying. Participants stated that they often did not get enough support from the university and continued to suffer in the absence of active support networks. Most of the academics interviewed highlighted an explicit need to develop support mechanisms for victims of workplace bullying. Liefoghe and Davey (2001), and D'Cruz and Noronha (2010), also noted lack of trust in an organisation's system to deal with bullying as a factor, which influenced the continuity of the behaviour. Aligning with similar views, Pilch and Turska (2015) also suggest that victims perceived a lack of confidence in the organisation's capacity to deal with workplace bullying; when they are unable to find any support networks in the organisation (Qureshi, Rasli, & Zaman, 2014). It may be contended that the absence of effective support mechanisms implicitly influenced the continuity of bullying. In light of this study's findings, universities may wish to invest in establishing active support networks to aid the victims of bullying, which may also prevent bullied staff from leaving; eventually reducing turnover.

FINDING SPECIFIC TO PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Professional staff interviewed for this study had a different view from the academics in terms of the technological factors. While the academics highlighted the systems in place to run the universities as factors, professional staff noted the influence of technological tools, such as emails and phone on the incidence of workplace bullying; discussed below.

USE OF EMAILS AND THE PHONE

Professional staff participating in this study reported the excessive use of emails and phone calls from the alleged perpetrator as a technological factor which facilitated bullying to occur. It was reported by the participants that technological tools like emails and phone enabled the alleged perpetrators to closely monitor the victim's routine work activities, often amounting to undue scrutiny. Based on this study, it may be contended that technology may actually facilitate workplace bullying in the higher education sector. As also noted by Farley et al. (2015), such close yet unwarranted surveillance was often viewed by the victims as being bullying. Forssell (2016) and O'Driscoll et al. (2016) also label such use of technological tools to bully as cyber bullying, although none of this study's participants labelled this as such. In their research on Australian higher education sector, Pignata and Winefield (2015) specifically observe that professional staff, as office workers, may be subject to a higher scrutiny, with less autonomy than academic staff. Cowie et al. (2002) acknowledged that excessive monitoring of daily work schedules often resulted in individuals feeling bullied, a view also supported by Fox and Stallworth (2005). Highlighting the use of technological tools in the form of excessive emails and phone calls, Becker, Catanio, and Bailey (2014), and Heatherington and Coyne (2014),

further contend that modern technology is another tool in hands of alleged perpetrators of workplace bullying, echoing this study's finding. As noted earlier in this section, these distinct findings between academic and professional staff may be a result of the different nature of work performed by these two group of employees. This study also found that by excessively emailing and phoning the victims, the alleged perpetrator tried to control the daily routines and movements of the victim; an aspect which also weaves in with earlier discussion on micro-management as bullying behaviour. This finding can also be linked to unfair management of employees in an organisation who may feel unnecessarily pressured by the constant surveillance on their movements; implicitly hampering organisational productivity.

POLICY

Academics and professional staff interviewed for this study reported the lack of effective anti-bullying policies at the organisational level as one of the factors that influenced bullying behaviours. While no organisation has a policy supporting bullying, the failure to effectively implement anti-bullying policies also serves to normalise such behaviour in the workplace. Salin (2003b) and Gardner et al. (2016) acknowledged that such non-implementation of policies does allow bullying behaviours to continue unchecked in an organisation. McCormack, Djurkovic, and Casimir (2013) further add that ineffective policies even encourage bullying, as the perpetrators do not fear any reprimanding due to their behaviours; compounded by the ineffectiveness of HR departments.

As MacIntosh (2012) observes, the lack of such definitive policies may also have prevented victims from pursuing a formal channel against bullying. In their studies on workplace bullying in academia overseas, Keashly and Neuman (2010), and Hollis

(2015) also found ineffective anti-bullying policies a key factor which promoted workplace bullying in the higher education sector. This study also found that in instances where such a policy did exist, the universities did not actively make the workforce aware of it; a factor most participants reported to have enabled bullying to occur and continue. This scenario may also have resulted in the lack of effectiveness of the HR department, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Typifying the opinions held by many of this study's participants, a professional staff member explicitly highlighted the lack of awareness about anti-bullying policies. This response also indicated that the participants viewed the university not being serious enough about the anti-bullying policies and its implementation.

6.2.3 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

As presented in the figure below (Figure 38), participants in this study reported a number of individual factors which influenced the incidence of workplace bullying in Australian academia. Among these, most factors were found to be common for both academic and professional staff, while one was specific to only professional staff. No factor was reported to be specific only to academic staff.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Common findings	Findings specific to Academics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power• Performance• Demography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jealousy

Figure 38: Individual factors influencing workplace bullying in Australian academia

COMMON FINDINGS

Power, performance and demography were the individual factors which were commonly reported by both the academics as well as professional staff.

POWER

In line with the views of Hutchinson and Jackson (2015), the element of power was also found to be a recurring individual factor influencing bullying among both, academics and professional staff. As also noted by McKay (2014) and Dzurec (2016), participants in this study highlighted power as a factor that led the bullying to occur initially and thereafter continue as well. This study also found that the power imbalance between the victim and the alleged perpetrator played a major role in letting the alleged perpetrator bully the victim. This view is also supported by Salin (2003a), McCormack, Djurkovic, and Casimir (2014) and Berlingieri (2015), who contend that power imbalance is one the major factors that give rise to and allow bullying behaviours to last. This study further found that power imbalance often refrained victims from taking a formal channel of complaint against the alleged perpetrators,

due to the latter' powerful position in the universities. Typifying the views of other participants in this study, a professional staff participant narrated her experience detailing how the power imbalance prevented her from reporting her superior as a bully.

According to this study's findings, having more power than the victim also meant that alleged perpetrators were able to skew the situation in their favour. While Hutchinson (2013) argues that such behaviour causes more harm to the victims, McKay et al. (2008) contends that rigid organisational hierarchies in the higher education sector often lead to power imbalance between individuals in the first place. As noted by Branch, Sheehan, Barker, and Ramsay (2004), and Hutchinson and Jackson (2015), such power often stems from the alleged perpetrators' position in the organisation and their expert knowledge. Keashly and Neuman (2010), and Ngale (2016) also found power imbalance to be a major influencing factor in their research on workplace bullying in the higher education sector overseas. This study in Australian higher education sector found that such power differentials often deterred victims from using a formal channel to address the behaviour. This study's findings suggest that position and knowledge based power often enabled alleged perpetrators to engage in bullying individuals, especially those who were lower than them in terms of rank and expertise. This outcome may also imply that the higher education sector consists of well-defined power relationships, which provide the enabling circumstances for bullying to occur.

PERFORMANCE

Performance was found to be another recurring individual factor that influenced workplace bullying amongst academics as well as professional staff. In line with the

work of Park and Ono (2016), participants in this study also reported that alleged perpetrators felt threatened by better performing individuals. Devonish (2013) and Tigrel and Kokolan (2009) consider this perceived threat of performance as a triggering factor that influences bullying. While supporting this view, Salin (2003a), and Jensen, Patel, and Raver (2014) describe bullying as a defensive tactic used by alleged perpetrators when they felt threatened by a better performing individual. It was found that individuals delivering high level of output, tacitly raised the benchmark for others which led the alleged perpetrators, who performed less effectively to feel threatened. The level of competition in the higher education sector (Shin & Jung, 2014), which has been discussed earlier in the chapter, also lead individuals to feel threatened about their own professional standing when they come across others who are performing better than them. The work of Keashly and Nowell (2003) in workplace bullying in the American higher education sector, also found the threat of performance to be a major influencing factor, supporting this study's findings in Australian academia. As discussed in this study's theoretical framework, the typology of organisational culture by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012, p. 177) categorises both Australia and USA as a task oriented and decentralised 'guided missile culture'; where individuals sharing similar work orientations work together to accomplish particular tasks. Both Australia (Favaloro, 2015) and USA (Maes, 2015) have well-developed higher education sectors that largely function on NPM based principles of governance (Ek, Ideland, Jonsson, & Malmberg, 2013) which may also trigger such intense pressure to perform on its workforce. Based on this study's findings, it may be contended that such pressure of performance may also have stemmed from the increasing competition in the Australian higher education sector; as discussed earlier.

DEMOGRAPHY

Demography emerged as another key factor in this study. While academics only highlighted the influence of individual's cultural background on workplace bullying, professional staff also emphasised the role of age and gender. These demographic factors are analysed in turn.

INDIVIDUAL'S CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Giorgi, Leon-Perez, and Arenas (2015) note that cultural backgrounds do influence the occurrence of workplace bullying. The influence of individual's cultural background on workplace bullying was commonly reported by both academic and professional staff. Participants in this study reported that cultural backgrounds of both, the alleged perpetrator and the victim determined how the behaviour was perceived at either end; a view also held by Leong and Crossman (2016), and Loh, Restubog, and Zagenczyk (2010). It was found that some individuals, based on their own cultural orientation, may view a particular behaviour as bullying while others from another different cultural background may not. While commenting on cultural influences on workplace bullying, other researchers, like Yokoyama et al. (2016) and Jacobson, Hood, and Buren III (2014) have also put forward similar views, although in work contexts other than academia.

The literature review for this study presented diverse viewpoints on the subject. While Sidle (2010) speculated whether individual perception, based on the cultural background could result in the behaviour to be termed as bullying; Lewis (2006), and Ireland (2006), were more specific in examining how different cultural backgrounds influenced the occurrence of bullying itself. Acknowledging the role of individual

cultural backgrounds in the incidence of workplace bullying, Omari and Sharma (2016, p. 39) suggest that culture forms the 'lens' through which individuals perceive certain behaviours to be bullying, reiterating this study's findings. This view was also widely supported by other researchers like Moayed, Daraiseh, Shell, and Salem (2006), Escartin, Zapf, Arrieta, and Rodriguez-Carballeira (2011) and Giorgi et al. (2015). This study's participants not only underlined the role of individual cultural backgrounds in the incidence of bullying, but also noted the need for spreading awareness about such cultural differences amongst the workforce. In view of this study's findings, it may be contended that universities may consider educating their workforce on how certain behaviours may be perceived as bullying by individuals with different cultural orientations; given the multicultural setup of the Australian higher education workforce and society at large.

AGE

In line with the views of Way, Jimmieson, Bordia, and Hepworth (2013), and Salin (2015), professional staff interviewed in this study also reported age as a factor influencing the occurrence of bullying. Some participants even suggested that older individuals may feel jealous of younger people progressing at a faster rate than them, prompting bullying behaviours; a view similar to Koh (2016). Jealousy as a factor influencing workplace bullying will be analysed further in the chapter. Anjum and Shoukat (2013), and Reknes, Einarsen, Knardahl, and Lau (2014), in their study on workplace bullying, have also contended how younger people are more susceptible to be targets of workplace bullying by older individuals. Consistent with the findings of Hollis (2014), participants in this study also stated that older individuals in positions of authority allegedly bullied younger professionals; a view also held by McCormack,

Djurkovic, and Casimir (2014), and van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007). While acknowledging age to be a major factor that influenced workplace bullying, this study's findings also highlight that younger individuals were generally viewed as being vulnerable by older workers in higher positions which may also have fuelled the behaviour. Findings on these lines have not been reported in any known studies on workplace bullying in academia and are therefore unique to this study.

GENDER

In addition to age, professional staff interviewed for this study also cited gender to have influenced the occurrence of bullying; a finding similar to O'Donnell and MacIntosh (2016). Participants reported women to be both, the most common alleged perpetrators as well as victims of bullying, indicating the role of female gender. Salin and Hoel (2013) also noted that women are generally indirect in their behaviour and are more likely to engage in subtle bullying. Presenting similar findings, Dentith, Wright, and Coryell (2015), and Yamada, Cappadocia, and Pepler (2014) also state that women are most likely to engage in bullying behaviours at the workplace. This study, however, found that women in positions of power saw bullying as a tool to affirm their authority in workplaces. In contrast Leigh, Robyn, Madelyn, and Jenni (2014) view women in subordinate roles as being the 'weaker sex', which made them an easy target for bullying. Other recent studies (e.g. Giorgi, Ando, Arenas, Shoss, & Leon-Perez, 2013) have also found women to be more likely to experience bullying; suggesting that females are more comfortable in labelling behaviours as bullying. While this study acknowledges the role of gender, it also contends that gender not only influences individuals perceiving certain behaviours as bullying, but also determines how victims respond to being bullied.

FINDING SPECIFIC TO ACADEMICS

Distinct from professional staff, academics participating in this study also highlighted (academic) jealousy, as a major factor influencing workplace bullying.

JEALOUSY

Consistent with the views of Koh (2016), academics in this study highlighted the role played by jealousy among individuals in the occurrence of bullying. Participants reported jealousy on the part of the alleged perpetrator to be one of the key factors influencing bullying, a view which is supported by this study's literature review (e.g. Perminiene, Kern, & Perminas, 2016). The work of Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2011) indicated that perpetrators often bear a sense of resentment towards victims, which incites them to indulge in bullying; a view that was also supported by Zapf (1999), and Weuve, Pitney, Martin, and Mazerolle (2014). This study, however, found that such jealousy may also be fuelled by the competitive environment in academia, as discussed earlier; which might pitch individuals against each other; in turn triggering workplace bullying.

Jealousy was not a factor highlighted by the professional staff interviewed for this study; which may be accredited to the difference in the type of work carried out by academics and professional staff. While echoing similar views, Bexley et al. (2013) further states that expectations between the two work-streams differ in terms of quality as well as quantity of outputs. It may be speculated that prestige, which academics attached to their educator roles, may be a reason which made them envy other fellow academics. While most participants were unable to identify any reasons for the alleged perpetrator to be jealous of them, they were others who cited better performance on

their own part as a reason which made the alleged perpetrators jealous. The role of performance in workplace bullying scenarios, as discussed earlier, has also been highlighted by Park and Ono (2016). Omari (2007) also found competence, or the lack thereof, as a factor influencing workplace bullying in the public sector; which may be viewed as parallel to higher education sector, in terms of organisational hierarchies, power structures and large workforce. Jealousy amongst the workforce also weaves in with the element of performance, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

6.3 RESEARCH QUESTION # 3: CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING

This study's third question focussed on exploring the different consequences of bullying in Australian academia. The consequences, as reported by the study participants, were classed as individual consequences for the victims, work consequences and organisational consequences. These are depicted below in the following figure (Figure 39) and analysed hereafter.

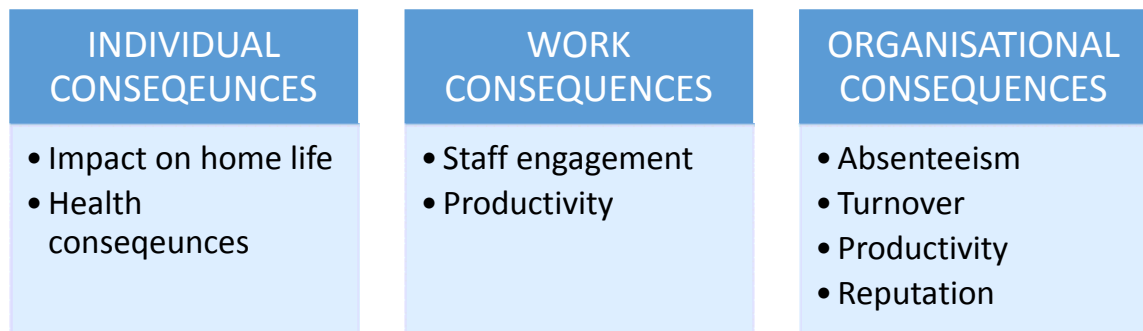


Figure 39: Consequences of workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector

6.3.1 INDIVIDUAL CONSEQUENCES

Both academics and professional staff reported the consequences which they suffered on an individual basis due to workplace bullying. Participants highlighted how workplace bullying adversely effected their home life and their health. These aspects are analysed below.

IMPACT ON HOME LIFE

In line with the findings of Wagner, Barnes, and Scott (2014), this study also found that victims carried the stress caused by being bullied at work to their homes. Most participants in this study reported that workplace bullying had adversely affected their personal life outside work, especially with family and friends. Some victims also reported to have found support from their families, especially partners; which helped them cope with bullying. Underlining the deep impact of workplace bullying, some participants even admitted to have burst into tears while sharing day-to-day bullying experiences with their families.

While Scott et al. (2014) acknowledge the support bullying victims get from their families and friends, this study argues that such social support may not substitute for the organisational support which these victims deserve. The crucial need of organisational support in aiding victims of workplace bullying in contrast to family support was also highlighted by Goodboy et al. (2017) and Kara, Kim, and Uysal (2015). Participants in this study also reported bullying to have primarily resulted in affecting their family life. Analysing the impact of bullying on home-life, it may be

contended that bullied workers are unable to separate the resultant stress at job from their family life, which then causes stress in their personal life as well.

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Consistent with the literature (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Park & Ono, 2016), most of the participants in this study reported to have suffered from a variety of health consequences due to workplace bullying. In concurrence with recent research (e.g. Han & Ha, 2016; O'Driscoll et al., 2016; Salin, 2015), these were divided into psychological and physical consequences; which may be closely linked with each other. Psychological consequences consisted of the effects that workplace bullying had on the mental well-being of an individual, while physical consequences were chiefly the reactions to the behaviour. These are further discussed below.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

As discussed in Chapter 2 (e.g. Kara et al., 2015; Kwan et al., 2016; Nielsen, Mageroy, Gjerstad, & Einarsen, 2014), workplace bullying results in psychologically harming individuals. While detailing similar experiences, academics and professional staff interviewed in this study also reported to have suffered from multiple psychological consequences; a finding similar to Neall and Tuckey (2014), and Hassan et al. (2015). While parallel views are also held by LaSala, Wilson, and Sprunk (2016), this study found that loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, emotional disturbance and stress were the most commonly suffered psychological effects. It was reported that these psychological consequences, on the whole, made the victims feel worthless in their professional spheres; an observation also made by Güngör and Açıklın (2016). While presenting similar findings in terms of psychological consequences, Hogh, Mikkelsen,

and Hansen (2011), Gardner et al. (2016), and Kwan et al. (2016) stated that it is the overwhelming nature of the bullying that causes the victims to feel psychologically distressed. Highlighting how bullying psychologically damages an individual, most participants in this study admitted being emotionally exhausted due to bullying.

Most of the participants in this study expressed that bullying at the workplace resulted in their loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, marring their ability to confidently seek employment in the future as well. Acknowledging this aspect, Hogg et al. (2011), Karatuna and Gok (2014), and Spence Laschinger and Nosko (2015) also found victims to continue suffering from psychological consequences of bullying long after it had stopped; having detrimental effects on their future employment prospects. Malinauskiene and Einarsen (2014), and Nielsen, Tangen, Idsoe, Matthiesen, and Magerøy (2015), tie such long-term psychological effects of workplace bullying with resultant post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the victims. Aligning with the views of Ek et al. (2013), and Palfreyman and Tapper (2014), the fear of being unable to find employment also stems from the prevailing sectoral conditions in the higher education sector; which have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

On a positive note, some participants also reported that bullying experiences inspired them to become stronger individuals, who would be more proactive against such behaviours in the future, directed either at themselves or others. For instance, a professional staff commented how bullying not only transformed him positively, but also made him more proactive with dealing with such behaviours in the future. While making similar observations, Heugten (2012), and Maidaniuc-Chirilă (2015) also found that this sense of developing as a stronger individual, stems from the resilience

which some victims involuntarily develop in the face of bullying. O'Donnell, MacIntosh, and Wuest (2010), and Lutgen-Sandvik, Hood, and Jacobson (2016), contend that resilience played an important role in helping victims cope with being bullied. Highlighting the role played by resilience, Bentley et al. (2009) also stated that resilient victims were able to effectively deal with any bullying related stress faced by them, not only while being bullied, but also post the experience. However, given the numerous negative consequences of bullying, it may be contended that not much scholarly attention has been given to the role of resilience. There is evidence from this study in the higher education sector to suggest that growing resilience and the victim's development as a stronger individual may be one possible positive consequence of workplace bullying. Future studies may be undertaken to further explore the concept of resilience to prevent workplace bullying.

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Physical consequences of workplace bullying for the victims have been widely supported by literature (e.g. Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Salin, 2015). Akin to the findings of O'Driscoll et al. (2016), a number of physical consequences caused by workplace bullying were also reported by both the academics and professional staff. While highlighting the physical consequences in their research on workplace bullying, Einarsen et al. (2011), and Hogh et al. (2011), stated that these are mainly the body's involuntary reactions to being bullied at work. This study found sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, physical anxiety, stress and general illness to be the most commonly specified ones. In this study, a majority of participants both academics and professional staff reported to have suffered from sleep disturbance; indicating how workplace bullying may disturb the victims' personal well-being.

Other researchers (e.g. Hansen et al., 2016; Hansen, Høgh, Garde, & Persson, 2014; Magee, Gordon, Robinson, Reis, Caputi, & Oades, 2015; Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2016) have also had similar findings, indicating that sleeping troubles may be the most prevalent physical health consequence of workplace bullying. While Høgh et al. (2011) also reports sleep disturbance as one of the most ordinarily suffered consequence, this study contends that it is primarily caused due to victims' stressing about the situation. Other researchers (e.g. Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2014) have, however, found workplace bullying to have caused more detrimental consequences for the victim's physical health, other than sleep disturbances. Among these, Høgh et al. (2011), and Eriksen, Høgh, and Hansen (2016) found physical anxiety, stress, loss of appetite and general illness to be the most commonly reported physical consequences. Consistent with the literature, some participants in this study also reported to have suffered from other physical consequences, such as, stress and general illness. Highlighting the gravity of the impact on physical health, participants often noted that in such instances medical attention was sought and prescription medication was involved to help remedy the situation.

6.3.2 WORKPLACE CONSEQUENCES

Park and Ono (2016) contend that workplace bullying results in negative consequences for the workplace. Both academics and professional staff interviewed for this study commonly noted the adverse effect of bullying on staff engagement and productivity. The two groups did not differ in their views on the workplace consequences of bullying.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

This study's participants reported to have reduced their level of staff engagement as they lost interest in their work due to workplace bullying. Victims stated that being bullied at work made them feel less appreciated and even unsafe. As a result, they did the minimum work required to fulfil their duties, a finding similar to Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, Lande, and Nielsen (2016). Whilst supporting this view, Ford, Myrden, Kelloway, Coffey, and Takahashi (2016) also contend that victims of such behaviours tend to become vulnerable, which may adversely affect the quality of their work. Highlighting the need for ensuring physical and psychological safety at workplaces, Kwan et al. (2016) urge organisations to actively initiate steps to ensure its employees' physical as well as psychological well-being.

In their research on workplace bullying in the higher education sector in USA, Keashly and Neuman (2010), and Hollis (2015) noted that such loss of interest in work adversely effects the quality of education delivered to students, resulting in repercussions for the larger community. This study further found that apart from losing interest in work, victims just did minimum tasks to fulfil their job requirements to remain employed. As participants in this study reported almost total loss of interest in work due to bullying, their productivity may have inevitably declined; a finding consistent with the those of Chen and Park (2015), and Power et al. (2013); discussed next in this chapter.

INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTIVITY

With reduced levels of staff engagement, both academics and professional staff participating in this study highlighted the adverse effect of workplace bullying on an individual's productivity; an observation similar to Magee, Gordon, Robinson, Reis, Caputi, and Lindsay (2015), and Rosekind et al. (2010). While echoing similar views, Heames and Harvey (2006), and Florriann and Seibel (2016), also found that victims may tend to work without taking any initiative, due loss of interest in their jobs; which implicitly affects their productivity.

Highlighting the adverse implications of workplace bullying on productivity, Matthiesen et al. (2008), and Olive and Cangemi (2015), also urged employers to take the issue seriously in order to reduce its incidence. Exploring workplace bullying in the Australian higher education sector, this study further found that apart from reducing victims' productivity, bullying also adversely affects the universities' overall performance in terms of teaching quality and research output. The organisational consequences due to workplace bullying are analysed next.

6.3.3 ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

As noted by various researchers (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011a; Hurley et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2014), workplace bullying results in widespread consequences for the organisation as a whole. Being profoundly affected by the behaviour at the individual level, this study's participants did not explicitly elaborate organisational consequences. Even though such consequences were not specifically highlighted, these could, however, be inferred from the interviews conducted with the academic and professional staff. Consistent with the framework of organisational consequences

due to workplace bullying by Bartlett and Bartlett (2011), these were classified into absenteeism, turnover, productivity and reputation and are discussed below.

ABSENTEEISM

As noted by Wilkins (2014), Skinner et al. (2015), and Magee, Gordon, Robinson, Reis, Caputi, and Oades (2015), workplace bullying often results in increasing the level of absenteeism in organisations. Referring to absenteeism in Australian academia, academics and professional staff reported to have sought ways to remain absent from work, in order to avoid working with the alleged perpetrator. This finding is similar to Eriksen et al. (2016), and Hurley et al. (2016), although in contexts other than academia. Most of this study's participants camouflaged such absence in the form sickness related or other formal leave types, which may have resulted in HR departments not recognising such absences being triggered by workplace bullying. Such views were not only expressed by the victims but also by witnesses to bullying behaviours. For instance, a professional staff member recalled his experience of witnessing how his co-worker planned to avoid being in the office at the same time as the alleged perpetrator.

Such discrete use of leave types not only results in increasing absenteeism, but also further testifies to the participants' reluctance to formally raise the issue of workplace bullying. While Kwan et al. (2016), and Purpora, Cooper, and Sharifi (2015), contend that such absence is often linked to the victims' loss of interest at work, this study further found such absence having the potential to negatively impact the organisational productivity. Similar observations were also made by Keashly and Neuman (2010), and Hollis (2015), in their research on workplace bullying in academia outside

Australia. Based on this study's findings, it may be contended that such absenteeism also indirectly results in lowering the quality of higher education delivered to the students; resulting in repercussions for the community beyond.

TURNOVER

As discussed in Chapter 2 (e.g. Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, et al., 2016; Glambek et al., 2014) organisations suffer from high turnover as a result of workplace bullying. Consistent with the findings of Pyhältö, Pietarinen, and Soini (2015), this study also highlighted increased employee turnover in universities due to bullying. Similar views are also echoed by Georgakopoulos, Wilkin, and Kent (2011), who added that organisations' lack of acknowledging and addressing bullying behaviours leads the employees to feel less appreciated; which may result in their eventual exit (Glambek et al., 2014).

This study found that employee turnover due to workplace bullying resulted in the loss of valuable talent for the universities. As also noted by Hayward, Bungay, Wolff, and MacDonald (2016), such loss of resources due to workplace bullying resulted in organisations employing new staff to replace the victims, in turn increasing staffing costs. Acknowledging this aspect, various researchers (e.g. Einarsen et al., 2011; Laschinger & Fida, 2014; Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Tepper, 2000) reiterate that bullying results in victims leaving the job to escape the situation; which not only results in loss of valuable human resources (Goldberg, Beitz, Wieland, & Levine, 2013), but also induces extra cost of hiring and training the new employees, especially in the higher education sector. This study's findings urge the universities to seek ways and means to retain its employees, by effectively ameliorating the occurrence of bullying. These

steps may include, but not be limited to, spreading of awareness and efficient implementation of a robust anti-bullying policy framework.

PRODUCTIVITY

As observed by Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, et al. (2016), and Florriann and Seibel (2016), workplace bullying has an adverse effect on an organisation's overall productivity. Indicating towards decreased productivity, this study's participants pointed towards a fall in their level of performance; which subsequently may have resulted in reducing the organisational productivity. Hoel et al. (2011), and Trad and Johnson (2014), note that victims of workplace bullying are often not able to fully concentrate on their work, which may also result in lowering the quality of tasks performed. Such scenarios, in effect may result in showing these victims as poor performers and therefore becoming a self-perpetuating cycle. Coupled with the increasing work pressures (Bradley, 2011) and job insecurity (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016) due to the ongoing sectoral conditions in the higher education domain (Dow, 2014); this study found that victims often tend to endure workplace bullying, albeit with resulting lower levels of performance. Building upon this study's findings, it is contended that organisational leadership in universities must take notice of workplace bullying's adverse effect on productivity and initiate measures to prevent such behaviour. Such measures will not only have a positive impact on organisational productivity, but will also secure employees' well-being at work.

REPUTATION

Researchers (e.g. Escartin, Zapf, et al., 2011; Johnson & Rea, 2009; Wiedmer, 2010) have long suggested that organisations need to address workplace bullying effectively,

in the view of the damage such behaviour does to the organisation's reputation (Neill & Tuckey, 2014; Yildirim, 2009); especially in the higher education sector (Antoniadou, Sandiford, Wright, & Alker, 2015). Academics as well as professional staff interviewed for this study also highlighted the damage that workplace bullying causes to universities' image. This study's participants also contended that exposure of workplace bullying in the wider public arena may result in tarnishing the universities' image as a model workplace. Echoing the views held by various other participants, one professional staff member remarked that reputational loss may also result in subsequent decline in the number of students joining the university.

Other researchers (e.g. Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005; Lester, 2009, 2013) also expressed similar concerns in their study of workplace bullying in the higher education sector; strengthening this study's findings. Apart from damaging universities' reputation, this study's findings also suggest that workplace bullying may hamper the future inflow of students as a result of the loss of public goodwill due to such behaviours. While Cleary, Walter, Horsfall, and Jackson (2013) acknowledge the damage to universities' reputation, this study contends that workplace bullying may adversely affect the quality of higher education provided to the students, resulting in adverse consequences for the larger community.

6.4 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Synthesis of this study's major findings on the issue workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector is represented in the figure below (Figure 40). Features defining the nature of bullying and the behaviours which were classified as bullying were the two major aspects highlighted by this study's findings. It was found that

factors in the universities' external and internal environment, along with a range of individual factors, influenced the occurrence of bullying. This study also noted the overarching influence of NPM on the incidence of workplace bullying in the Australian higher education sector; a context unexplored in earlier studies. The advent of NPM in academia has revolutionised the way this sector functions, not only in Australia but around the world. Providing enabling circumstances for bullying to occur, the implementation of NPM practices, as discussed earlier in this thesis, has transformed the sector into an industry operating along the lines of profitability and competition. Workplace bullying was also reported to have resulted in consequences at the individual, workplace and the wider organisational level.

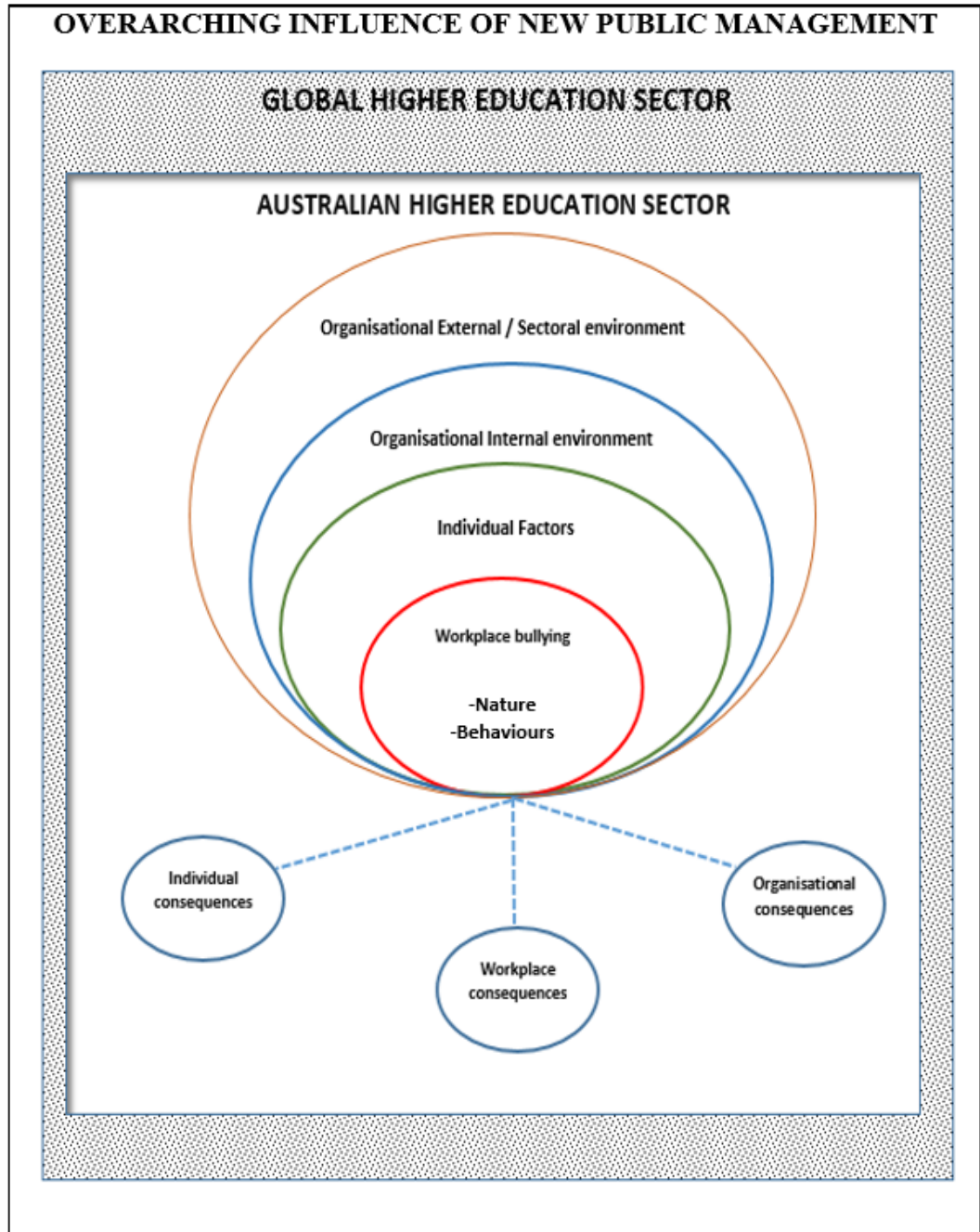


Figure 40: Workplace bullying in Australian higher education sector

While most of the findings were consistent with findings reported by other scholars in other contexts and countries, some of this study's findings are exclusive in the context of Australian higher education sector. For instance, with respect to the nature of

bullying, literature (e.g. Hoel et al., 2001; Leymann, 1996; Vartia & Leka, 2011; Zapf & Einarsen, 2001; Zapf & Gross, 2001) and legislation ("*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*," 2014) point at its ongoing aspect; supporting some of this study's findings. Although, in contrast to most literature on bullying, this study also found incidences of singular incidents being labelled as bullying; therefore providing an alternate view of the behaviour. With regards to factors influencing bullying in Australian higher education sector, this study found rigid organisational hierarchies in universities to be a major factor, along with the current budgetary controls in the sector. Previous research (e.g. Gallant, 2011; Keashly & Neuman, 2010; McKay, 2014) also identified structural hierarchies as a major influencing factor; while the prevailing financial cutbacks were also identified by different scholars (e.g. Amaral, 2003; Bordia & DiFonzo, 2013; McKay, 2014; Parker, 2011; Schafferer & Szanajda, 2013). In the context of Australian academia, however, this study particularly found the lack of robust anti-bullying policies and ineffective HR departments to have played a major role in silently condoning bullying behaviours. Exploring the consequences of bullying, this study found the loss of productivity as a major organisational concern for the universities; this was directly reported and could be inferred from the data collected. On an individual level, however, this study exclusively found instances of victims transforming into stronger individuals post bullying; pointing towards the positive role of resilience. While there are some previous studies (e.g. Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2016) that highlighted the role of resilience, not much scholarly attention has been paid to this positive aspect which needs to be explored further. Harvey, Heames, Richey, and Leonard (2006), Matthiesen et al. (2008), and Keashly and Neuman (2010) also recommend that future studies are needed to explore the role of resilience in workplace

bullying. Since this study was conducted in the Australian higher education sector, its findings may have limited applicability in non-Australian academic settings.

6.5 STUDY LIMITATIONS

As with any research, this study also had certain inherent limitations which had been considered both during the course of this research and at its conclusion. As noted by Flick (2002), and Berk and Michalak (2015), exploratory research on subjective issues has a major focus on the qualitative aspect. As S. Lewis (2015) observes, the major benefit of an exploratory research is that it generates insights, helps in understanding the phenomena being researched and provides directions for future research in the area. Cooper and Schindler (2014), however, caution that it is essential to be reasonably aware of any limitations, which may have hindered or impacted the course of such a study and its results. Given the subjectivity and sensitivity associated with workplace bullying (Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, & Crann, 2015; Fahie, 2014; Hurley et al., 2016), it was essential to bear in mind the points above, as they pre-empted the researcher of this study to be aware of the possible limiting factors.

For the purpose of this study, the following limitations were identified:

- While some participants occasionally chose to provide only scant details of their bullying experience; for a few recalling the events was somewhat upsetting which may have resulted in divulging less information. Some participants in this study also became emotional whilst recounting their experience during the course of the interview. Although such emotional display testifies to the severe impact of bullying, it may also have led the participants to provide limited details of their experience.

- The participants who reported their retrospective accounts of witnessing another individual being bullied added their own subjective views while interpreting the behaviour; inevitably putting their own lens on the events.
- Considering the time gap between the actual occurrence of bullying and this study, some participants may not have been completely precise in recalling the events which occurred in the past. This aspect may have added some recall related issues for the data collected.
- This study explored workplace bullying in four Western Australian public universities. Insights and findings from this study may have limited implications or applicability for private universities or sectors other than Australian academia, or possibly beyond Western Australia given the state's unique economical standing at the time (please see Chapter 3 for further details).

These limitations may or may not have had the potential to have affected the findings of this research. As the limitations mentioned above may not be all inclusive, some other hidden limitations might not have surfaced during the study's course, but may have been latently present.

This chapter analysed the specific issues surrounding the occurrence of workplace bullying in Australian academia. Some findings were common to both academics and professional staff, whilst some only related to one group or another. This indicates that even in the same settings, different occupational groups may have different experiences depending on their role, standing and seniority. The subjective nature of bullying has also been noted by other scholars (e.g. Gaffney, DreMarco, Hofmeyer, Vessey, & Budin, 2012; Nielsen & Knardahl, 2015). The majority of academics and professional staff underlined the subjectivity of bullying which made it difficult for them to pinpoint the behaviour and seek redress. Participants also identified the broad tolerance towards bullying, as being a part of the universities' work culture. Similar findings were also noted by Keashly and Neuman (2010), although in the context of American higher education sector. Both the academic and professional staff stressed that workplace bullying had the potential to damage the reputation of their universities; indicating how the behaviour could result in wider implications for the higher education sector as a whole. All the above findings demonstrate the relevance of addressing workplace bullying as a serious concern in Australian higher education sector. The next chapter concludes this study by summarising its key findings on the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia; along with outlining the future directions for research and practice.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

This chapter concludes the study by summarising the key findings, along with implications for higher education institutions and the wider community. These findings explore the nature, influencing factors and consequences of workplace bullying in Australian academia. The chapter ends with a discussion of future directions for research and practice to ameliorate workplace bullying, in academia

This exploratory study focussed on understanding how workplace bullying unfolds in Australian academia. Data gathered through semi-structured interviews was thematically analysed and addressed the research questions; exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences of bullying in the Australian higher education sector. This chapter highlights the study's key contributions to theory and practice. Being the first comprehensive study of workplace bullying in Australian academia, the research explored bullying from the perspective of both academic and professional staff at four Western Australian public universities. Singular but severe incidents of workplace bullying, and upward bullying, both findings from this study, are largely unexplored in the literature. Findings from this study therefore contribute to extant theory by providing alternate views of workplace bullying. The participants also noted the overarching influence of NPM practices in the Australian higher education sector which may have influenced the occurrence of bullying. As outlined in the discussion chapter, some aspects of workplace bullying were found to be common to both academic and professional staff, while others were specific to each group. The major reflections on this study's key questions are summarised below. The chapter will conclude this thesis with a discussion on the future directions of research and practice.

7.1 THE NATURE OF BULLYING IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

The first research question aimed to explore the nature of workplace bullying in the higher education sector from two distinct perspectives. First, the features that study participants used to describe the nature of the bullying behaviour and second, the actions which they viewed as bullying.

7.1.1 NATURE OF THE BEHAVIOUR

This study found that bullying was commonly viewed as an ongoing behaviour by most of the workers interviewed in the four WA public universities. While all the academics interviewed for this study held this view, some professional staff also identified singular incidents as bullying. The reasons why these two groups of workers in universities may differ on what constitutes bullying are discussed further in this section. The professional staff members emphasised the severity and impact of such singular incidents, which led them to label the behaviours as bullying. Such difference in viewpoint may stem from the distinct nature of work performed by academic and professional staff. While academic staff are primarily responsible for teaching and research at the university, professional staff provide support services to both academics and students. As also elaborated in the Discussion chapter, the way jobs are designed may also influence how individuals may view and label behaviours as bullying. Unlike academic staff who generally have autonomous work patterns, professional staff are subjected to more regular and close supervision, providing more favourable grounds for bullying to occur. The routine supervision which professional staff in universities are subjected to may result in any everyday interaction with line managers, possibly being perceived as micro-management and in turn bullying.

While this study found bullying to be generally downward, from superior to subordinate, some academic as well as professional staff also reported having been bullied by their subordinates; resulting in upward bullying. In instances of upward bullying this study found that it was a group of workers who allegedly bullied their superior, as individuals on their own may not have had the courage to do so. As outlined in the discussion chapter, there has been limited research on upward bullying and such behaviours are not conventionally recorded in the literature; thus, in academia, with its unique two-tiered workforce, this is a new finding. It may be the case that upward bullying does occur in universities but is rarely reported. A reason for lack of reporting may be the doubts that may be raised about the target's managerial capabilities. This reluctance may also relate to the notion of power in hierarchical organisations, such as the universities. Apaydin (2012) and Buka and Karaj (2012) underline how power imbalances in universities stem from rigid organisational structures. Such hierarchies do not encourage individuals in leadership roles to report being bullied, and any such reports might jeopardise future career prospects within universities. Therefore, while upward bullying may occur in universities, it may often not be reported. Nonetheless, it still may cause significant harm, not only to the individuals' health and well-being, but also to universities' overall productivity in terms of teaching, research and service outputs. Based on this study's findings, universities' anti-bullying policies should also acknowledge the potential for upward bullying and suggest ways to address it. These measures may include appropriate training and counselling for all the parties involved.

7.1.2 BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Participants in this study labelled different behaviours as bullying. The study found that both academics and professional staff viewed social exclusion to be considered

bullying behaviour. It may be contended that by socially excluding individuals, alleged perpetrators aimed to isolate the victims in the workplace, effectively limiting any support they may get from co-workers. Social exclusion not only hampers such collaborative association amongst individuals, but also restrict victims' interactions with other employees. The "Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 33), which outlines how the nature of conflict moulds group members' behaviour, suggests that by limiting cohesion amongst the group as a whole, social exclusion makes bullying an issue for the entire workplace. Prior research (e.g. Ford, Myrden, Kelloway, Coffey, & Takahashi, 2016) has shown that this situation may have adverse effect on the level of staff engagement and productivity. Social exclusion may also result in victims losing interest in their job and knowingly reducing the quality and their levels of output and productivity; affecting universities' overall performance. The low levels of staff engagement reported in this study can also be tied to individuals feeling excluded and therefore not a part of the work team; which may lead them to be indifferent to whether they make any contribution or not. This study also found that subtle nature of social exclusion made it difficult for victims in the universities to pinpoint the behaviour and seek corrective measures; this often resulted in bullying being continued unchecked.

Victimisation was another significant form of bullying reported by this study's participants. Both academic and professional staff reported victimisation as a behaviour amounting to bullying. Some victims as well as witnesses also reported to have silently suffered being bullied as they feared victimisation if they raised their voice against the behaviour. In their study on whistleblowing, Dussuyer, Armstrong, and Smith (2015) found that individuals reporting negative workplace behaviour such

as bullying often experienced victimisation. In the context of Australian academia, this study found that individuals facing victimisation often highlighted the lack of implementation of anti-bullying policies and the absence of support mechanisms. Victimisation reported in this study therefore points towards the lack of a robust organisational policy framework against bullying. Such policy gaps in the Australian universities relating to workplace bullying may implicitly allow perpetrators to victimise targets, without fear of ramifications; thus resulting in bullying to continue. This lack of policy framework may also render HR departments ineffective in their efforts to manage workplace bullying. Based on this study's findings, universities may consider incorporating support measures for bullying victims within their policy framework which may aid the HR departments in effectively dealing with workplace bullying.

7.2 THE FACTORS INFLUENCING WORKPLACE BULLYING IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

Previous research (e.g. Berlingieri, 2015) notes the influence of various individual and organisational factors on workplace bullying. In line with this study's theoretical framework, this study categorised the reported factors into organisational, both external and internal and individual factors; summarised below.

7.2.1 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The existing high level of competition in Australian higher education sector (Barker, 2015; Skinner et al., 2015) was found to be a significant external factor which triggered workplace bullying. This competitive environment may be attributed to the implementation of NPM in the sector. Participants contended that the competitiveness in universities often resulted in workers viewing each other as rivals rather than

collegial teammates, in turn reducing the level of fellowship amongst the sector's workforce. The findings also suggest that alleged perpetrators often resorted to bullying competing workers, as means to strengthen their own position in the workplace. Implying bullying to be a self-protecting measure, Omari, Paull, and Crews (2013, p. 6) link such defensive strategies to strive in a competitive environment to the "survival of the fittest" notion. It may be concluded that rising competition in this sector has resulted in individuals turning against each other. Such competitiveness not only affects the collegiality, but also adversely impacts the delivery of higher education to students; resulting in adverse consequences for the wider society. These consequences may include negative impact on the institution's ability to attract and retain quality staff and students, delivering high level education and research, and therefore being unable to fulfil the institution's community roles.

The current diminished funding in the Australian higher education sector was also highlighted in this study as one of the key external factors influencing the occurrence of bullying. Although recently released, the present Australian federal budget 2017-2018 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) continues to propose further cuts to the higher education sector to the tune of AUS\$ 2.9 billion, severely pressurising its existing limited resources. Participants emphasised two different aspects as key influencing factors with this regard; the financial constraints on the universities, and the resultant employment patterns in academia. First, this study found that financial constraints, mainly in the form of budgetary cuts, resulted in redundancies, which created a sense of insecurity in the workers' psyche. This situation may have compelled the victims of bullying to remain silent, as they feared risking their employment by calling attention to themselves. In view of these financial constraints,

victims may have felt trapped in their workplaces with a lack of alternate employment opportunities within the sector or beyond. Second, a shift towards employing a casual workforce is an emergent employment pattern in universities. As reported by this study's participants, the rise of temporary employment in the Australian universities due to reduced public funding was found to have created a sense of job insecurity amongst the employees. Similar concerns were also raised by the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (2016) in its annual report on the sector, where job insecurity was reported as influencing the occurrence of workplace bullying. The report (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association, 2016) stated that individuals employed on temporary basis often chose to silently suffer being bullied.

Dumitru, Burtaverde, and Mihaila (2015) highlight the role of organisational commitment amongst bullying victims which determines their response to this negative workplace behaviour. This study, however, found that bullying victims often felt devalued by the lack of organisational support and perceived the welfare as not being protected at the organisational level. Bullied individuals who choose to stay on in the organisation and endure the behaviour because they have to, demonstrate "continuance commitment" (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002, p. 21), largely due to lack of alternate employment opportunities. Being insecure about their employment's continuity, such individuals may also have become easy targets for the alleged perpetrators aware of the vulnerability of these individuals' employment. It may be concluded that the external environment in which the Australian higher education sector functions, characterised by financial cutbacks and increasing competition, influences the occurrence of bullying amongst its workforce.

7.2.2 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The structure in universities, in terms of organisational hierarchies, was found to be a prominent internal factor which facilitated the occurrence of workplace bullying. It was reported that rigid levels of hierarchy did not only enable bullying to occur in the first place, but also made it difficult for victims to take steps to stop such behaviour. Hierarchies resulted in individuals at higher levels yielding power over others, creating an imbalance. In the light of participants' views, this study found that organisational hierarchies in universities may result in their workforce becoming more susceptible to bullying. The organisational structure in universities also indicated the rigidity in hierarchies, which gave more senior individuals the liberty to engage in bullying those junior to them. While the notion of power and its influence on workplace bullying has been well established in literature (e.g. Dzurec, 2016; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2015), power stemming from organisational hierarchies may be attributed as "position power" (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, & Coulter, 2014, p. 574), which may facilitate the occurrence of bullying. Apart from power emanating from a position, this study also found that power in universities may also stem from knowledge which the alleged perpetrators have and withhold from others in order to allegedly bully them.

The findings further suggest that the tolerance towards workplace bullying, embedded in the organisational culture is also a critical internal factor which allows the behaviour to occur and continue. Both academic and professional staff reported to have observed such tacit acceptance of workplace bullying to be rooted in the universities' culture. Such tolerance encourages the alleged perpetrators to indulge in bullying, rendering the victims to silently suffer the behaviour. This study also found that such tolerance may have led the sector's workforce in general to assume bullying to be a normalised

behaviour which they were expected to endure. This in turn relates to how bullying behaviours may become the norm and may perpetuate in the organisational culture (Samnani, 2013), specifically in the higher education sector (Hollis, 2015). This notion may also lead co-workers, who witnessed bullying, to remain silent as they presumed the behaviour to be routine in universities.

7.2.3 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Power was found to be a significant individual factor influencing the occurrence of workplace bullying. The notion of power in universities' work-setting also relates to the hierarchal structures, which may facilitate workplace bullying. This study found higher education institutions to be inherently composed of work relationships based on power imbalances, which gave individuals in powerful positions all the enabling circumstances to indulge in bullying those under their authority. Power structures exist in universities to streamline routine functioning, however, this study found that they are often be used by the alleged perpetrators as a tool to bully others.

This study found individuals' performance to be another key factor influencing workplace bullying. An emerging theme amongst academics and professional staff interviewed for this study was that they were bullied due to being perceived as a potential threat to the alleged perpetrators' professional standing in the workplace. This study found that alleged perpetrators often engaged in bullying those individuals who they perceived as a threat to themselves in terms of performance and output. The prevailing highly competitive work environment in the Australian higher education sector may also have resulted in individuals feeling less secure in their workplace. This sense of insecurity may have made the alleged perpetrators wary of those who

performed better. Drawing upon Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943, p. 373) the need for "safety" is a fundamental physiological need, which if threatened, may lead individuals to react in self-defence. In the context of a workplace, such safety may include the secure environment posing little threat to workers' psychological and physical health.

Khan (2014) notes that workplace bullying may be one such self-defence strategy adopted by individuals threatened by other co-workers' performance. It may be contended that high performing individuals raised the benchmarks for others at the workplace, which may have prompted the alleged perpetrators to engage in bullying behaviours. The interplay of power and performance on an individual level also reflects on the wider organisational environment which exerts constant pressure on the sector's workforce to deliver increasingly high volume of output with relatively lesser resources. Such a volatile working environment may provide circumstances which facilitate the occurrence of bullying. As noted in this study, such volatile environment may be shaped by the ongoing financial constraints and increasing competitiveness in Australian academia, largely due to the implementation of NPM practices in the sector.

7.3 CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING IN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIA

Data collected for this study highlighted different consequences of workplace bullying. These consequences were mainly categorised at the individual, workplace and the organisational levels. The key findings in each of these categories and their implications for the Australian higher education sector are summarised below.

7.3.1 INDIVIDUAL CONSEQUENCES

Adverse health effects suffered by the victims of bullying, both psychological and physical, were one of the key individual consequences reported in this study. This study also found that most of the victims suffered from both psychological and physical consequences at the same time as there was an interrelationship between the two. From a psychological perspective, loss of self-confidence and esteem emerged to be one of the most prominently reported effects that victims endured; being bullied made the victims feel worthless. Such individuals also reported a drop in their quality of work. This highlighted the extent of damage workplace bullying may cause, not only to individuals' sense of self-worth, but also on their level of productivity. This may become a cyclical and therefore self-perpetuating issue, where bullying causes a reduction in victims' confidence, resulting in a decline in their work performance which may trigger further bullying and the cycle continues. Workplace bullying therefore may not only hamper the quality of higher education imparted to students, but may also adversely affect the level of research outputs delivered; resulting in consequences for the community beyond. On a positive note, some participants in this study reported to have developed into stronger and resilient individuals following the bullying experience. It was also found that these individuals became more vigilant about such behaviour in the future and made strategic arrangements to safeguard themselves from being bullied again. Literature (e.g. Heugten, 2012) reviewed for this study indicates that this positive outcome of bullying has largely been left unexplored and future research could be conducted to explore this aspect.

Participants also reported to have suffered from a variety of physical consequences due to bullying. Sleep disturbance was found to be one of the most widely reported physical consequence of bullying, indicating that psychological stress may result in

physical discomfort. Sleep disturbances may have occurred due to victims' heightened state of alertness emanating from the situation. Apart from sleep disturbances, other physical consequences reported in this study include general illness, loss of appetite, anxiety and stress. These individual consequences in turn have adverse implications for universities in terms of productivity, absenteeism and turnover; all of which are key organisational performance indicators (Peretz, Levi, & Fried, 2015). Overall, this study found workplace bullying to have resulted in widespread psychological as well as physical consequences for the workforce interviewed from the four Western Australian public universities. It also further found that most victims of bullying in Australian academia often suffer from both physical and psychological consequences simultaneously, compounding the detrimental health effects of workplace bullying.

7.3.2 WORKPLACE CONSEQUENCES

At the workplace level, this study's findings suggest that bullying resulted in reducing the levels of staff engagement and individual productivity. Employees' loss of interest in work resulted in the subsequent decrease in their productivity. As reported by the academic and professional staff, being bullied made them feel unappreciated and unprotected. Participants indicated that they just performed the base minimum of their duties without taking any initiative to go above and beyond. This study's findings suggest that victims may have displayed such lack of initiative as bullying made them feel that their work is not acknowledged. It was also indicated that workplace bullying not only affects the individual levels of output, but also has an adverse ripple effect on others employees, who work in collaboration with these victims; thus potentially hampering the universities' productivity as a whole. El-Houfey, El-Maged, and Elserogy (2015) link such loss of productivity with the decreased motivation amongst bullied employees, which in turn adversely affects the level of motivation in the whole

team. In light of this study's findings, universities may wish to renew focus on providing a bullying free environment to their workforce, therefore protecting employees' welfare as well as enhancing organisational productivity.

7.3.3 ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Workplace bullying was found to have adverse consequences for universities on an organisational level. Apart from rise in absenteeism, an increase in employee turnover due to staff departure can be inferred from this study's findings. This outcome may have subsequently increased not only the recruitment costs incurred by these institutions to replace the employees who left, but also training costs for the replaced staff members. Such turnover of employees due to bullying may also have decreased the motivation of the co-workers who were left behind. It may be added that universities first need to acknowledge the occurrence of workplace bullying in their working environment in order to take steps to ameliorate it.

A significant finding of this study is the potential damage that workplace bullying may cause to universities' reputation. Academics as well as professional staff both contended that bullying scenarios, when exposed in the larger public arena, may cause significant damage to universities' reputation and standing. Negative reports could spread through the family and friends of the bullied workers, who are privy to the victims' experience of bullying. Such damage to people's goodwill towards the university will not only deter good potential employees from joining the institution; but may also discourage prospective students from considering these universities for further education. This study observed that workplace bullying costs the universities, not only in terms of student enrolments, but also talent recruitment. In view of such

widespread consequences of bullying, universities may need to, as Omari (2007) also contends, initiate measures to ensure dignity and respect for all workers, both academic as well professional staff.

7.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study demonstrated that workplace bullying is not openly discussed and addressed in the four Western Australian public universities. Bullying, however, does occur in these institutions, as demonstrated in this study; and more focus needs to be gathered on the behaviour's occurrence in various contexts including Australian academia. This study's findings highlighted a tendency of universities to ignore these behaviours, often at the cost of bullied individuals. Higher education institutions concerned about improving productivity of their academic and professional staff may need to address ways to minimise the incidence of bullying. Universities may consider initiating steps to spread further awareness amongst their employees regarding this negative workplace behaviour which is also a threat organisational productivity. The work culture prevalent in universities and the ambiguity involved in defining bullying may provide a conducive environment for the behaviour to occur, complemented by the lack of robustly implemented anti-bullying policies.

This study's findings also suggest that bullying may have become a normalised aspect of workplace culture for both academic and professional staff at the universities under investigation. Such scenarios are further fuelled by the NPM practices implemented in the Australian higher education sector which may result in staff feeling less secure and more vulnerable in a highly competitive environment. The uncertainty of employment in the sector also adds to employees' reluctance to address bullying via

formal channels, enabling the behaviour to continue unchecked. Such workplace culture of silence, in combination with NPM practices, might have helped normalise bullying at these institutions. Nonetheless, workplace bullying does adversely affect individuals and organisations on the whole. Further research focussed on exploring multiple layers of workplace bullying in the Australian higher education sector and beyond needs to be undertaken in order to initiate steps to ameliorate these behaviours. Such future research is much needed as workplace bullying not only harms individuals and organisations, but also adversely affects the wider community and the nation as a whole.

7.5 FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

While this study's findings addressed some of the gaps in the existing body of knowledge, it flagged other aspects that still need to be addressed. These aspects relate to workplace bullying and opportunities for further enquiry to address issues relating research and practice, such as the need for developing a holistic definition of bullying. Each of these aspects are briefly summarised below.

7.5.1 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies focussed on workplace bullying are needed to explore different aspects of this behaviour, for example, a comprehensive definition to include singular incidents, which remain largely unaddressed in recent studies. There remains a need for developing a holistic definition of bullying which takes into account multiple viewpoints of various stakeholders, including self-identified victims, alleged perpetrators, human resource personnel and organisations. Development of such multi-dimensional definition would not only help in identifying workplace bullying effectively, but also aid in initiating steps to prevent the behaviour. While this study

noted singular incidents as bullying and occurrence of upward bullying, these constructs may need to be added to the definition of workplace bullying to expand the behaviour's overview.

This study collected and analysed individual accounts of workplace bullying experienced by the participating academic and professional staff from four Western Australian public universities. It was found that professional staff members, who work in close collaboration and often under routine supervision, are more vocal and upfront in labelling behaviours as bullying in comparison to academics. Future research may investigate why professional staff are more likely to experience and label behaviours as workplace bullying than academic staff. Researchers may also explore whether more nuanced measures are needed to identify and address a behaviour such as bullying; which specific groups may experience differently. While underlining the role of resilience, some participants also highlighted their transformation into stronger individuals post bullying experience. Being largely unaddressed in literature, future studies may also be undertaken to explore this positive outcome of bullying. Since this study is based on victims' and bystanders' accounts of workplace bullying, further research may be directed towards exploring the viewpoints of other stakeholders, like the alleged perpetrators, the human resources practitioners and the organisations; providing alternate perspectives on the behaviour.

As this research, exploring the nature, influencing factors and consequences of bullying was conducted amongst staff at public universities, similar studies in a private university setting may provide different or additional findings. Since the public universities under investigation were based in Western Australia, this study's findings

may be used as a base to conduct similar studies across different states and territories of Australia, including multi-state studies. Apart from providing the state specific picture of workplace bullying in the Australian university system, such studies may also provide grounds for comparing findings between different states and territories. Conducting cross-country studies of workplace bullying which compare the incidence in different cultural contexts and settings would be useful in providing steps for ameliorating the behaviour. While the findings from this WA based qualitative study may mirror workplace bullying trends prevalent in the state's four public universities, future quantitative or mixed methods studies with more objective sampling are needed to explore workplace bullying scenarios further. Similar research may also be conducted in higher education institutions across Australia's different states and territories to paint a broader picture.

7.5.2 DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study's findings also provide future directions for practice, with the main focus on improving work environments in Australian universities in particular, and organisations in general. The following figure (Figure 41) depicts these directions.

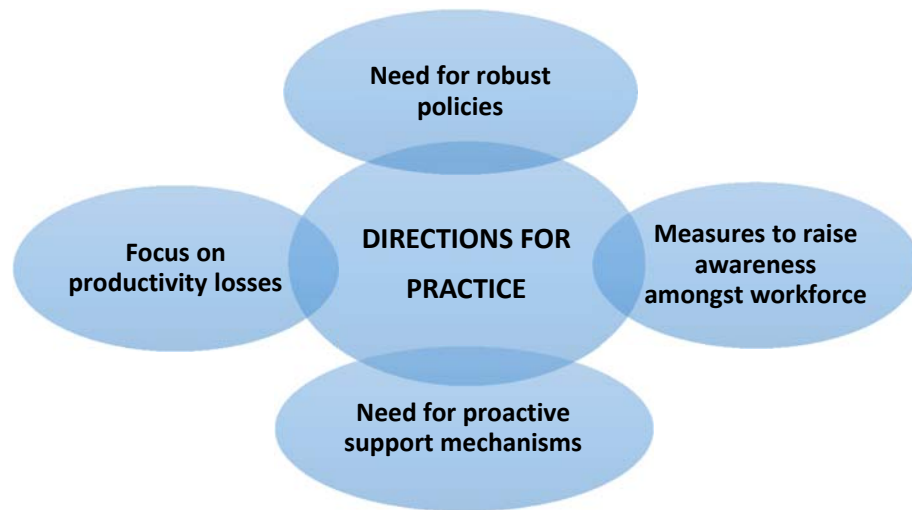


Figure 41: Future directions for practice

This study's findings point towards the need for developing robust policies to counter workplace bullying. Participants, both academic and professional, noted that existing policies were either not strong enough to deal with the behaviour, or were not effectively implemented. In both these work-streams, the bullied individuals viewed themselves as being helpless in the absence of an effectively executed anti-bullying policy framework. Universities in particular, and organisations in general, may consider reviewing their existing policies regarding workplace bullying to ensure that these are more focussed on supporting the bullied individuals; and are consistently executed to safeguard workers' well-being. Such effective implementation of policies may also result in timely intervention in bullying incidences, which may ultimately result in reducing the behaviour's occurrence. Some participants also noted the lack of awareness about anti-bullying policies which further limited the assistance and support victims could seek. While this study did not specifically gather the views on HR professionals, its participants also revealed the perceived ineffectiveness of the HR department in dealing with behaviours such as workplace bullying. Participants

were hoping that HR professionals would become more supportive of, and proactive in their dealings with victims of bullying.

Findings from this study also highlighted the lack of awareness about existing anti-bullying policies amongst the workforce. Participants in particular noted how workplace bullying was not given prominence in training and development activities in their universities. The existence of anti-bullying policies are of little value, if they are not widely communicated amongst the workforce. It may also be the case that the staff members in question had not taken note of these policies; an aspect which also needs to be explored further to help organisations develop into better workplaces. A workforce well aware of anti-bullying policies may view their welfare as being protected at the organisational level, and potentially may become more motivated as well as productive. In light of this study's findings, universities may also consider initiating training programs and information sessions especially designed to educate the workforce about bullying. Such steps will not only reduce the occurrence of workplace bullying, but may also aid in ameliorating the behaviour.

The participants not only highlighted the need for a robust policy framework, but also noted the need for developing proactive support mechanisms around the policy. A number of participants in this study either did not find the existing support mechanisms very helpful from the perspective of the victims, or highlighted a lack of available support mechanisms. Human resources departments were particularly singled out for their lack of support to bullied individuals. Building upon this study's findings, universities may also consider reviewing their human resource practices to make them more inclined towards supporting victims of negative workplace behaviours. In turn, such active support mechanisms may result in workers feeling more secure and

supported at organisations, which may in turn have a positive impact on their levels of engagement and output. In the context of Australian higher education sector, such output may be in the form of teaching and research for academic staff and quality support services for professional staff.

While none of the academic or professional staff participants made any explicit reference to the recently amended *Australian Fair Work Act 2014*; this omission may have been because the legislation had just come into effect when this study's data was collected. With more awareness being spread about this legislation, further research could be carried out to explore how victims may or may not view workplace bullying in the same operational light as the Act does. Along with providing recommendations for future legislative amendments, such studies may also unearth key issues related to workplace bullying, which the amended *Australian Fair Work Act 2014* may not have addressed.

Finally, this study's findings suggest universities as well as organisations need to be mindful of productivity losses due to workplace bullying. A recurring theme in this study indicated that being bullied had adversely affected the individuals' performance at work; eventually resulting in decreased productivity. If universities operated from a perspective of improving efficiency, they would consider investigating the productivity losses due to workplace bullying. Such loss of productivity could be in terms of teaching and research for academic staff, and support services for the professional staff. On the societal level, workplace bullying may adversely impact the intellectual contributions universities make to the community at large. Focusing on

productivity may also result in leaders in the university realising the harm brought about by bullying at an organisational level. This may in turn result in renewed efforts to reduce the behaviour's occurrence in universities. Students studying at universities in which workplace bullying is guarded against, may also carry the same ethos with them when they enter the workforce; benefitting the community beyond.

It is clearly evident that bullying has hugely detrimental consequences at individual, work and the organisational levels. Interviewing victims of bullying demonstrated the value of qualitative research in exploring subjective behaviours such as workplace bullying as it provided the researcher with the opportunity to unfold different layers of the behaviour. The study yielded rich description of workplace bullying and the lived experience of victims and bystanders, as well as testified to the adverse consequences of the behaviour. The resilience this study's participants demonstrated in narrating their accounts of being bullied was inspiring. This study, however, also noted the perceived lack of useful support available to these individuals by their workplaces; highlighting challenges in dealing with workplace bullying despite policy and legislation in place. As noted in this study, a workforce which perceives its welfare being valued at the institutional level may feel more committed towards the organisation; in turn increasing its productivity. Clearly, there is immense scope for further research on how universities and other organisations can better equip their staff to reduce the incidence of bullying and support the well-being of all their employees; positively contributing to the wider society.

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APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION LETTER FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

(On University Letterhead)

Information Letter for Semi-Structured Interviews

Manish Sharma
School of Business & Law
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup Campus
270 Joondalup Drive
Joondalup W.A. 6027

Date:

Subject: Workplace Bullying: An exploratory study in Australian academia

Dear Participant,

This is in reference to a study being conducted on exploring workplace bullying in Australian academia. I would like to inform you that I have now commenced the data collection phase and would like to confirm that you are interested in participating in the interview. Please be assured that all the information provided by you will be treated with complete confidentiality and anonymity.

As you are already aware, the organisations today comprise of a diverse workforce, where people from different cultural backgrounds work together coherently, to achieve the organisational goals. With majority of our day spent at our workplace, the environment there has a significant impact on us. It is, however, alarming to note that bullying behaviour is silently establishing itself as a latent epidemic across Australian universities. I am conducting a study on how this behaviour unfolds in Australian academia.

I am interested in asking a variety of questions relating to this area. Please feel free to provide as many details as possible in your responses. Please be informed that all the information gathered will be completely confidential and anonymous. Please be assured that no individuals and / or organisational entities will be identified in the research findings. I would request you to kindly refrain from mentioning any names, or identifying characteristics of any individuals or organisations.

Please feel free to ask me any questions at this stage.

I would also like to seek your approval to audio tape this interview. This would provide me with an opportunity to closely capture your inputs, and would give me a chance to carefully analyse them in future, for the purpose of this study. I would like to assure you that this conversation will remain completely confidential. If funding may allow, I may seek to have the audiotapes transcribed by an appropriate person, who will also be required to maintain complete confidentiality. The notes and audiotapes from this interview would be kept in a

secure lockable storage, and will only be assessed by the researcher. Please be assured that all identifying labels (i.e. names or organisational entities) will be removed from the data. The information gathered would be securely stored for the duration of the study, and the required timeframe for the PhD award after which it will be destroyed as per the ECU guidelines. If approval is not accorded for tape recording this interview, notes will be taken.

Before commencing, I would like to inform you that the interview is expected to last 45 minutes approximately. Please be informed that you are welcome to refuse answering any of the questions, you may not be comfortable with, or withdraw from the interview at any stage should you decide to do so.

Conclusively, if you have any further concerns relating to this study, you may contact: The Research Ethics Officer, Edith Cowan University, 270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup WA 6027, Tel: (08) 63042170, email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.

Please do ask me any questions that you may have at this stage. (If there aren't any further questions, you are hereby provided with the consent form and if the consent is accorded, the interview will formally commence.)

If you have any queries regarding this study or your participation, please feel free to contact me on msharma4@our.ecu.edu.au or 0424249059, or my Principal Supervisor Associate Professor Maryam Omari on m.omari@ecu.edu.au or 6304-5588.

Once again, thank you for your interest in this study.

Sincerely yours,

Manish Sharma

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

(On University Letterhead)

Consent Form for Semi Structured Interviews

Manish Sharma
School of Business & Law
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup Campus
270 Joondalup Drive
Joondalup W.A. 6027

Date:

Subject: Workplace Bullying: An exploratory study in Australian academia

Dear Participant,

Subsequent to your reading the 'Information Letter', if you are still willing to take part in the semi- structured interview, I would like to request you to kindly read the following before providing your consent to participate in this study, by your signature.

- I have been provided with a copy of the information letter, explaining the research study.
- I have read and understood the information provided.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I am aware that I have any additional questions I can contact the research team.
- I understand that participation in the research project will involve a semi structured interview process.
- I understand that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that the identity of participants will not be disclosed.
- I understand that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and understand how the information is to be used.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty.
- I agree to have this interview tape recorded.
- I freely agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant

For any further queries relating to this study, please feel free to contact me on msharma4@our.ecu.edu.au or 0424249059 or my principal supervisor Associate Professor Maryam Omari on m.omari@ecu.edu.au or 6304-5588.

APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I would like to thank you for participating in this interview. Before commencing, I would request you to confirm that you are happy to have this interview tape recorded. Please be assured of complete confidentiality with respect to all the information provided by you. Please be informed that you are free to withdraw from this interview at any stage that you may wish.

1. Have you been bullied in the workplace or have you witnessed someone else being subjected to the bullying. Please explain.

2. (a) What, in your opinion, were the reasons for the bullying behaviour?

2. (b) Do you believe that your background, cultural or other, had an impact on your bullying experience. Please explain in details.

3. Please describe any steps that were taken to stop the bullying from continuing. If no steps were taken, please explain why?

4. Please explain the consequences of the bullying behaviour.

5. What is / was the organisation's stance (prevention or tolerance) towards the bullying behaviour?

6. If a formal channel to redress was taken, what level of support was provided by the organisation and the co-workers?

7. What role did the culture of the organisation play in tolerating or preventing the bullying behaviour?

8. Are there any other details you will like to add or elaborate on?

Thank you for your time and assistance in contributing to this study.

APPENDIX 4: SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

The researcher agrees that workplace bullying is an emotive subject and it may be a possibility that some of the participants may require counselling after discussing the subject. For assisting the participants, who may become distressed, the researcher provides the following list of reputed counselling services to help the concerned individuals:

- 1. Lifeline 24 hours Crisis Line 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au**
- 2. Beyond Blue 24 hours Help Line 1300 22 4636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au**
- 3. Salvo Care 24 hours Help Line 1300 36 36 22 or visit www.salvos.org.au**

APPENDIX 5: A SNAPSHOT OF CODE GENERATION

A sample of first level thematic coding of the transcript of an interview with a professional staff member (Professional staff #3, female)

Interview extract	First level thematic codes
<p>Well, it depends upon your definition of bullying. I define bullying as to when you are forced to do something or someone is forcing their values or expectations on you, without any consultation and by force, when you have not agreed to do it. I would say that I have been bullied, in the sense that people had made decisions that directly affected me, without any consultation and those decisions have actually gone against my values and ethics.</p> <p>When the persons (sic) have a certain agendas, certain expectations and what I was doing, my values conflicted with their values. But they felt that they were superior to me and so were their values. And they thought that they should win out.</p> <p>And there was a power imbalance there. I wouldn't perceive it that way. I was just doing my role in my position, and I think that there was a power imbalance there. They thought that I would outperform them by my good work and they felt threatened by my performance. I feel that often, the bullies are insecure in some way and they feel threatened. They felt a need to be in power and also in control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of victim defines bullying • Aggressive manner and tone of voice • Feeling of superiority to others • Unjustified workload • Threat of performance • Power imbalance • Insecurities of bullies
<p>Ok, I am thinking of this one situation and this one male, was from an Asian culture and I think that bit is a very masculine culture and therefore, the person concerned was very used to having an upper hand, the power. And he didn't perceive women in equal light. So, I do think culture, particularly gender, had a very key role to play in my experience of bullying at the workplace.</p> <p>I probably used an assertive approach and said that this is my view, that when you say this, this is how it affects me. So, I wanted to let them know that their behaviour and their tone affected what I was doing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of national culture • Role of gender (masculine) • Confrontation with the bully
<p>It did affect my overall personal performance. The stress level was high and had an impact on my sleep. It affected my state of mind, my emotional state and it go to the point where, even though I knew that I could challenge the situation, I felt that I could not work in that environment any longer. So, I actually ended up leaving. And I felt better after leaving, much better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse effect on overall performance • High stress levels • Sleep disturbance • Emotional harm • Left the job • Felt happy leaving
<p>I didn't feel that there was much support and the bullying occurred from the managers themselves and so, I wasn't going to get any support from any corner. And also, I thought that Human Resources wasn't effective. The way the HR was, it wasn't a very objective situation. I felt that it was ineffective. Well, they turned it around and almost said that I was perceiving the situation in correctly. They said that may be the problem lies at your end than the others'. And that's why I felt quite happy after leaving the job. I used to dread going to that place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR ineffective • Managers are bully so no support • No formal channel taken • Hate going to work