An Exploratory Study on how Workplace Bullying is Conceptualised in the Australasian Media

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Abstract

Workplace bullying continues to be a prominent issue in both New Zealand and Australian workplaces. Victims of workplace bullying suffer a multitude of grievances on a personal and working level, reducing their job satisfaction and job performance, whilst increasing levels of absenteeism and likelihood of quitting the organisation. An organisation which enables workplace bullying to remain unresolved is breaching legal statutes in Australasia, which require that employers provide a safe environment for their workers. This paper reports on an analysis of some 200 media articles from Australasia regarding the issue of workplace bullying, with a view to understanding how bullying is represented in the media. From a work-environment hypothesis view, the analysis sought to determine whether bullying was portrayed as predominantly a product of the work environment, or as a largely interpersonal concern. The findings of this paper suggest that although reports of the words "culture" and "environment" are present, particularly in New Zealand articles, there is little evidence from media accounts to indicate that Australasian sources perceive the issue of workplace bullying as one that is derivative from an organisation's workplace environment. The implications of this finding indicate that Australasian media sources are placing the blame of bullying behaviours on the actions of employees, rather than holding organisations responsible for creating an environment that enables workplace bullying behaviours to occur.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed,   Date: 27 January 2016

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1. Introduction

Workplace bullying remains a prominent issue in both New Zealand and Australian workplaces. As a recent example, a 2011 survey of over 1700 New Zealand workers found that 17.8% of respondents had been a victim of workplace bullying (Bentley et al., 2009; O'Driscoll et al., 2011). In South Australia, a survey of over 1100 workers found that 15.2% of respondents had experienced workplace bullying (Keuskamp et al., 2012). The phenomenon of workplace bullying has been represented through an extensive amount of review by both New Zealand and Australian media sources. Similarities between the societal values, a strong economic association, and the legal frameworks of New Zealand and Australia, allows the countries to be considered together and contrasted in regards to their approaches in tackling the issue of workplace bullying (Blackwood et al., 2013).

It is the aim of this paper to determine how various New Zealand and Australian media sources conceptualise the issue of workplace bullying. Media reports were chosen for this project because of the potential of this medium to reach a wide audience of people, and to influence public opinion. It is of particular interest to discover if Australasian media reports project workplace bullying as an interpersonal problem, arising from disagreements between two or more individuals, or whether the issue can be attributed to a number of factors which are present within a particular organisational environment.

It is the stance of this report that although interpersonal aspects play a role in the presence of workplace bullying, it is an organisation's environment which has the greatest effect on the prevalence of workplace bullying behaviours. Negative influences including unhealthy and constantly changing work environments, ineffective methods of leadership, a non-supportive organisational culture and poor approaches to resolving the issue enables the problem of workplace bullying to not only happen, but to reoccur without adequate resolution. This viewpoint is consistent with the observations of the work-environment hypothesis (Einarsen et al., 2011).

This research paper collected 200 articles which related to workplace bullying, from media sources throughout Australasia. Articles that were published in the past five years

were searched for preselected key-words concerning the issue of workplace bullying. The selected key-words focused on terms associated with methods of bullying resolution, bullying techniques used by perpetrators, complaint methods utilised by victims, legislature regarding workplace bullying, and environmental elements of an organisation which contribute to the problem. The findings of this research paper indicate that whilst Australasian media sources report high levels of the key-word "culture" and New Zealand articles have a moderate frequency of the word term "environment", there is no overwhelming evidence to suggest that Australasian media sources conceptualise the issue of workplace bullying as a product that is caused largely by a workplace's environment.

2. Literature review

2.1 What is workplace bullying?

It is difficult to define workplace bullying in a clear-cut manner because of the sheer number of definitions available in addition to the many factors that have an influence the problem. However, for the purposes of this report, workplace bullying is defined as the persistent and constant targeting of an individual or group of workers by a perpetrator (Hauge et al., 2007). Workplace bullying can include gossiping or spreading rumours about a particular co-worker, in addition to the repetitive humiliation and exclusion of a person from a social work group or setting (Sanstone & Sanstone, 2015). Workplace bullying can be subtle or blatant in its approach, and can extend to shaming and recurring aggressive behaviours towards an individual (Braithwaite & Ahmed, 2015). Victims of workplace bullying may receive inadequate resources for their working duties, and be delegated unreasonable workloads by their perpetrators (Rayner & Cooper, 2006).

Workplace bullying has a strong negative influence on a victim's experience within an organisation. An employee who is targeted by a perpetrator can be subjected to a number of bullying behaviours over a series of months. Consequently, a targeted employee may experience a great deal of distress and have significant levels of job dissatisfaction (Hauge et al., 2007). Bullied individuals may see a steady decline in their work performance, have higher levels of absenteeism, and be more inclined to leave their job in comparison to their untargeted co-workers (O'Driscoll et al., 2011). On a personal level, individuals who are victimised by workplace bullies can suffer from a multitude of grievances. Targets of workplace bullying report increased levels of nervous tension and distress whilst at work (Bano & Malik, 2013). Furthermore, victims can experience prolonged and elevated levels of stress, damaging their overall wellbeing and potentially leading to cases of severe anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder or employee burnout (Rayner & Lewis, 2011). In Van Heugten's (2013) study of bullied social workers in New Zealand, nine out of the seventeen participants reported needing to visit a physician as a result of their experiences. Of these nine social workers, five were diagnosed with clinical depression (Van Heugten, 2013). In addition to the trauma suffered by a target on an individual level, both New Zealand and Australia have reported cases of employees

committing suicide as a result of their exposure to prolonged workplace bullying behaviours (Stojanova, 2014; Chisholm, 2015).

Finally, workplace bullying can be attributed to negative task-related and personal behaviours. These behaviours are often present but unspoken in an organisational setting, and have the potential to impact the level of workplace bullying. A negative task-related behaviour can derive from an employee's inability to manage work-related tasks effectively. This ineffectiveness can result in employees becoming targets of future workplace bullying behaviours (Bentley et al., 2009). An employee who displays negative personal behaviours may increase their likelihood of becoming targeted by workplace bullies if they lack the knowledge to resolve workplace conflict, or lose the support of their co-workers. (Zapf & Gross, 2001). Managers who fail to intervene, or ignore the issue of workplace bullying display personal behaviours that enable the problem to continue (Einarsen et al., 2011).

2.2 The work-environment hypothesis

The work-environment hypothesis theorises that a poorly organised working environment can result in an increase in employee conflict and workplace bullying behaviours (Einarsen et al., 2011). Role stressors such as role conflict and task management have the biggest influence on levels of workplace bullying and harassment within an organisational setting (Einarsen et al., 1994). In addition to role stressors, organisations who create an environment which places a great deal of pressure on its employees, will increase the likelihood of their workers falling victim to workplace bullying behaviours (Einarsen et al., 2011). Additionally, those who work under fast-paced organisational environments without access to adequate task-related resources are often victimised by senior staff members (Baillien et al., 2011). Furthermore, workplaces who create a fast pace environment are increasing their employees work loads and hours. This puts a great deal of stress on workplace bullying perpetrators, who under pressure, become more likely to show aggression towards their victims (Einarsen et al., 2011).

Employees who are working in stressful environments where conflict and bullying is widespread, may voice their opinion with managerial staff members. In instances where the manager is the perpetrator of bullying behaviours this action may work to further victimise employees (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Workers who find themselves employed under managers who have created a non-supportive social climate will be more likely to become

targeted by workplace bullies (Einarsen et al., 1994). Additionally, managers who fail to provide effective strategies to combat reports of workplace bullying may unknowingly create an environment where the practice becomes normalised behaviour (Rosseau et al., 2014). By contrast, those employed in an environment which visibly defines work roles, provides trustworthy management who intervenes in employee complaints, and who allocates resources effectively, report fewer incidences of workplace conflict and bullying behaviours (Einarsen et al., 1994).

2.3 Leadership styles

There is much evidence to suggest that the environment of a workplace can determine whether its employees become victimised by workplace bullies. An insufficient style of leadership, in conjunction to a badly managed working environment, can increase the prevalence of workplace bullying in an organisational setting (Skogstad et al., 2011). Furthermore, an environment that fails to provide trustworthy leadership, a stable organisational culture, and methods to resolve the practice, allows workplace bullying not only to happen, but to reoccur frequently without an adequate solution (Einarsen et al., 2013).

A leadership style which an organisation has adopted has the potential to increase the prevalence of employees being targeted by workplace bullies. An effective leader, who aims to reduce the incidence of bullying behaviours within their workplace, will delegate defined work tasks to their subordinates, enable employees to approach them, and provide a safe environment for their workers (Skehan, 2015). Leaders who choose to neglect their responsibilities can create a chaotic working environment, where there is confusion amongst employees regarding both work-related tasks and organisational goals. Leaders who are overbearing, or absent from their post may limit their subordinate's access to resources, thus creating a stressful working environment which increases the prevalence of bullying behaviours and employee victimisation (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007).

Managers who possess traits which are inadequate for effective leadership may be more likely to bully their subordinates. In their 2015 research, Braithwaite and Ahmed found that senior leaders who displayed narcissistic pride bullied their employees by methods of shaming. By comparison managers who adopted a humbled pride were far less likely to bully their subordinates and made for more effective leaders (Braithwaite & Ahmed, 2015). A 2012 study by Keuskamp et al. discovered that a leader's level of authority,

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length of tenure and level of education were indicative in the presence of workplace bullying. Employees who were highly educated at university, divorced or widowed and who held positions of superiority in a professional work setting, were more likely to be the perpetrators of workplace bullying behaviours (Keuskamp et al., 2012).

An analysis of leadership styles by Hoel et al. (2010) concluded that autocratic, tyrannical and laissez faire approaches to leadership had implications of the level of workplace bullying within an organisation (Hoel et al., 2010). In their previous research, Hoel and Salin (2003) outlined each leadership style in detail. Leaders who are autocratic have a tendency to take control of a workplace. They use power to gain compliance from their subordinates and to meet strict workplace objectives. Tyrannical leaders are the dictators of the workplace. They demand strict authority and compliance with their agenda. Communication processes between tyrannical leaders and their subordinates are almost entirely top down. Laissez faire leaders take a hands off approach, and may appear absent in their leadership position. Under this leadership style employees are given control of their day to day tasks with resources being allocated by the laissez faire leader (Hoel & Salin, 2003). In their 2010 study, Hoel et al. found that workers who had been employed at their posts for a long period of time, found their autocratic or tyrannical leader's attempts to control and micromanage their day to day activities both disruptive and irritating (Hoel et al., 2010).

In their 2007 study of employee trust Schoorman et al. identified that employees constrained under autocratic or tyrannical leadership styles felt intimidated and chose not to voice their opinions in front of their leaders in fear of being ridiculed or bullied (Schoorman et al., 2007). Hoel and Salin's 2003 study found that bullied employees would often refrain from contributing when working under authoritarian leaders who constrained their resources. This would often result in employees further victimising themselves by drawing their leader's attention as a result of their lack of involvement (Hoel & Salin, 2003). An employee's hesitation to interact with an authoritative leader in the decision making process signifies not only a lack of trust in the leader, but a clear disruption in communication process between the two workers. This breakdown is detrimental to an organisation's overall productivity (Schoorman et al., 2007).

In a 2010 study, Hoel et al. identified that laissez faire managers were shown to let down their employees by failing to fulfil their responsibilities as a leader by intervening in instances of workplace conflict. Subordinates working under this method of leadership reported feeling that they had been abandoned or excluded by their leader's failure to

guide their workplace to meet organisational goals (Hoel et al., 2010). A study conducted by Nielsen, (2013) identified that laissez-faire styles of leadership were correlated to an increase of complaints regarding bullying behaviours (Nielsen, 2013). Hauge et al. (2007) found that under laissez faire leadership, conflicts arose between subordinates regarding organisational tasks and managerial conduct. Some of these conflicts between employees escalated into incidences of workplace bullying behaviours, which were ignored by leaders (Hauge et al., 2007). These results emulate the findings of Einarsen et al. who in their 2003 analysis, reported that laissez-fair style leaders would often add to the problem of workplace bullying by ignoring a bully's behaviours, and neglecting opportunities to mediate despite receiving numerous complaints from employees (Einarsen et al., 2003). Conversely, a study by Rosseau et al. (2014) found that targeted workers who were employed under a highly autonomous laissez faire like working environment retained a higher level of trust in their leaders. Furthermore, this style of leadership provided employees to have a greater level of freedom over their tasks, and aided in employees who were targeted by bullying behaviours to avoid their perpetrators (Rosseau et al., 2014).

A number of recent studies have pointed to the effectiveness of transformational leadership styles in addressing problems associated with workplace bullying. When a transformational style of leadership is adopted within a workplace environment, employees are able to work alongside leaders to establish rules of conduct regarding both expected organisational behaviours, and strategies for approaching instances of workplace bullying (Skogstad et al., 2011). Transformational leaders are able to contribute towards the creation of a workplace environment which is more adept at managing and finding solutions to employee conflict, harassment and bullying. Over time, a transformational leader can develop an organisational norm where workplace bullying behaviours are not tolerated (Astrauskaite et al., 2015). Nielsen's (2013) study of transformational leaders found that managers who adopted this style of leadership effectively reported lower levels of workplace bullying behaviours among subordinates. Additionally, managers who displayed a transformational leadership style frequently sought to provide their subordinates with a safe working environment (Nielsen, 2013). A study by Ertureten et al. (2013) found that transformational methods of leadership reduced the prevalence of damaging mobbing behaviours whilst authoritarian styles of leadership raised it (Ertureten et al., 2013).

Research by Astrauskaite et al. (2015) indicates that a negative association exists between high levels of workplace harassment within an organisation and a transformational style of leadership. Transformational leaders were also perceived more favourably by employees who worked under them, because of their nature to treat co-workers as equals. Furthermore, as transformational leaders were not seen to be overbearing, a level of employee autonomy was able to be established, given employees a greater level of responsibility over their day to day activities (Astrauskaite et al., 2015). Finally, transformational styles of leadership have been attributed to an increase in employee morale. In their study Ertureten et al. (2013) observed that transformational styles of leadership were attributed to employee inspiration and feelings of self-assurance. Employees also reported feeling less stressed when working under a transformational leader (Ertureten et al., 2013).

2.4 An organisational culture of support

A workplace environment which has supportive managerial staff can encourage victims of workplace bullying to report their perpetrators. In a 2012 study by Balducci et al. it was identified that employees who worked in a positive environment had higher levels of trust in their leaders. This translated to workers feeling more inclined to report bullying behaviours, or observed bullying behaviours to authoritative staff members (Balducci et al., 2012). Skogstad et al. (2011) found that employees who were managed in a stable environment, which had a high levels of trust between employees, and positive social interactions, would experience decreased levels of workplace bullying. By contrast those who worked in an environment with inadequate social interaction had an elevated chance of becoming victims of workplace bullying (Skogstad et al., 2011). These findings correspond with Rosseau et al. (2014) who reported that employees who trusted their managers, and who worked in a positive social climate were far more inclined to openly recommend solutions for reducing or stopping incidences of bullying behaviours within their workplace environment (Rosseau et al., 2014).

A positive support system, which is led by senior managers can influence how workplace bullying is mediated, and the frequency at which employees report observing or being the targets of bullying behaviours. A supportive environment, where management can easily be approached by victimised employees allows for the intervention of bullying behaviours (Skogstad et al., 2011). In their study of employees working in the New

Zealand travel industry, Bentley et al. (2012) found that respondents identified that experiences of positive interactions with co-workers and open methods of communication within an organisation, made the mediation of workplace bullying behaviours more successful (Bentley et al., 2012). Employees who fail to receive support from their co-workers or organisation were more likely to identify negative behaviours within their workplace as occurrences of workplace bullying behaviours (Rosseau et al., 2014).

The benefits of a positive support network within an organisation can extend to the wellbeing of a workplace's employees. Workers who were employed in a positive work climate report health related issues less frequently (Rosseau et al., 2014). By contrast, a prolonged culture where workplace bullying has been accepted within an organisational setting has been shown to have a negative influence both the culture of a workplace, and the psychological health of its employees. Furthermore, an organisation that has regular incidences of workplace bullying may have established a culture where bullying is unresolved and considered normalised behaviour (Giorgi, 2012). Future victimisation of employees by workplace bullies is likely to occur within organisations that disregard organisational norms and have support networks that are ineffective at managing bullying behaviours (Balducci et al., 2012). Workplaces do have the potential to establish a positive organisational culture, where support from managers and co-workers during times of stress are not only present, but are considered normative behaviour (Rosseau et al., 2014). Establishing an environment where workplace bullying is not tolerated is a top down process which begins with leaders and managers, and ends with employees. All employees regardless of hierarchal position need to be dedicated towards the process for the change to be successful. Consequently, organisational managers need to lead the way by showing their subordinates that they are making a committed approach to developing, and maintaining a new workplace culture (Riley et al., 2014).

2.5 Access to resources

A leader who restricts an individual's access to needed resources, is inhibiting their employee's task progression, in addition to creating a more stressful work environment for their subordinates. A stressful workplace environment where employees are underperforming and lack motivation or trust in their managers, often correlates to elevate levels of perceived workplace bullying and bullying victimisation (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Skogstad et al., 2011). Under the conservation of resources theory, employees who

are sufficiently resourced for their organisational duties, report higher levels of trust towards their managers, will have reduced incidences of employee overload, and experience a decreased level of perceived workplace bullying behaviours (Rosseau et al., 2014; Baillien et al., 2011). A study by Wheeler et al. (2010) reported that limitation of workplace resources will almost always predictably end in employee conflict or workplace bullying. Additionally, employees who are targeted and fail to remain productive under a depleted level of resources, may experience further resource reduction. This can accumulate to a point where a target feels unsupported by management and makes a choice to resign from the organisation (Wheeler et al., 2010).

A study by Balducci et al. (2012) concluded that role stressors, especially disputes relating to role conflict, had an association on individuals becoming victimised by workplace bullying 12 months later (Balducci et al., 2012). Workplace bullying can be more prevalent during times where management lacks control, and there is ambiguity surrounding future events (Van Heugten, 2011). An organisational environment which is being afflicted by high levels of stress can expect an escalation of workplace bullying behaviours (Hauge et al., 2007; Hoel et al., 2010). A study by Baillien et al. (2011) found that, in line with the work-environment hypothesis, in stressful organisational environments where job resources were scarce, workplace bullies would target employees who they considered "easy" prey more frequently (Baillien et al., 2011). In a 2012 study, Giorgi found that under stressful working conditions, negative behaviours or actions performed at work had a corresponding negative impact on the organisational environment (Giorgi, 2012). Within workplaces where employees experience a great deal of distress, a human resource practitioner could be appointed. Human resource practitioners serve a considerable function as a "change agent to the workplace environment" in cases of workplace bullying. Practitioners work towards changing the organisational environment, whilst providing insight into workplace bullying disputes. It is important to note that these practitioners are not excluded from the negative effects that workplace bullying behaviours have on an organisation's environment (Fox & Cowan., 2015).

2.6 An organisation's responsibility

In New Zealand, an organisation has a legal and ethical responsibility to keep their employees safe within their working environment. Failure to take pre-emptive action to

reduce workplace bullying and elevated levels of employee stress could leave employers accountable under legal examination (Wallace et al., 2010). Additionally, managers who fail to intervene, despite accounts of workplace bullying are neglecting an opportunity to provide their employees with a supportive working environment. The consequences of a manager or organisation adopting such a stance are potentially calamitous. Victims or observers of workplace bullying behaviours who are employed in an unsupportive organisational environment display a lack of trust in management, are less productive and report greater levels of job dissatisfaction (Hauge et al., 2007; Halbesleben et al., 2014). Additionally, an organisation that enables practices of workplace bullying to occur will have an elevated level of employee turnover (Wheeler et al., 2010). A comprehensive study by Franklin & Chadwick, (2013) found that nurses and midwives in Queensland who reported being bullied at work, and where an organisation failed to take action, had a high rate of resignation (Franklin & Chadwick, 2013).

An organisation which is committed to providing their employees with a safe environment to work in must develop strategies to reduce the incidence of workplace bullying. Creating an environment which works towards protecting victimised employees who wish to make a complaint about a bullying perpetrator is a necessity (Skogstad et al., 2011).To achieve this an organisation may have to change their workplace environment so that reports of bullying are no longer ignored, and where managers are both supportive and protective of an employee who files a complaint. An organisation who wishes to change their policy, regarding how working bullying is reported and arbitrated must initially ensure that the concept is visibly defined to employees (Askew et al., 2013). A procedure concerning both formal and informal complaints must be accessible so that a variety of situations may be addressed. This policy should extend to the methods used to penalise employees for exercising bullying behaviours (Rayner & Lewis, 2011). Any changes to policy or to the organisational environment must be adhered to and led by both managers and senior members of staff (Askew et al., 2013).

2.7 Co-workers and workplace bullying

Co-workers are not exempt from receiving the negative spill-overs associated with workplace bulling. Both victimised employees and non-targeted employees can be harmfully afflicted by an inoperative working environment, where workplace bullying is present (Skogstad et al., 2011). Furthermore, workers who observe bullying behaviours

have been seen to disregard normal workplace customs, and are less adept at performing their work tasks in comparison to others (Giorgi, 2012). The nature of a workplace environment plays a key role in determining whether an employee will receive support from their colleagues. A lack of social support by co-workers can influence whether destructive behaviours like workplace bullying are observed more frequently. More problematic is that co-workers who observe bullying behaviours may be hesitant to report it because they have only seen the behaviour infrequently, are concerned about their own job security, or see the conflict between the victim and perpetrator as an interpersonal problem (Van Heugten, 2011). Additionally, many employees fear that they will become the bully's new target if they report the occurrence. Many co-workers who observe the practice of workplace bullying fail to intervene because they simply lack the knowledge to do so (Van Heugten, 2013).

A system of social support can be adopted and implemented into a workplace environment as a result of intentional design by managers and employees, or via coincidence. Under this system, co-workers perceive an environment that offers social support as normal behaviour. Additionally, employees are urged to advocate for and encourage their colleagues. A strong social support system amongst co-workers can be very resourceful when individuals are targeted by a workplace bully (Rosseau et al., 2014). Van Heugten's (2013) study of New Zealand social workers found that bullied employees who had experienced negative health outcomes, grouped together to give each other emotional support during their period of victimisation. Targets who had a strong support network of co-workers were shown to have intensified levels of resilience against their bullying perpetrators. Conversely, employees who did not actively seek support from their co-workers had further negative afflictions, in addition to their victimisation and frequently reported feeling isolated (Van Heugten, 2013). Maidaniuc-Chirila, (2015) identified that individuals who were forced to develop a sense of resilience in a group setting, were able to reduce the impact of mental and physical distress. These findings are significant for groups of employees or co-workers who wish to aid those who have become targeted by workplace bullies (Maidaniuc-Chirila, 2015).

2.8 Intervention

It is important to identify what actions can be taken by an individual who is targeted by a workplace bully. Employees who are in this situation may find themselves in a position

of vulnerability when looking for a solution to their ill-treatment (Kemp, 2014). If an employee refuses to take action against a bullying perpetrator they could be targeted until their bully finds a new victim or leaves the organisation. (Chan-Mok et al., 2014). A formal approach requires the victimised employee to approach management, or to file a complaint against their bullying perpetrator. The most common forms of bullying resolution practices are mediation and intervention processes (Kemp, 2014).

Mediation is a secondary resolution process which involves the targeted victim and the workplace bully coming together under the presence of an unbiased mediator. Both parties will state their intended outcome of the process and it is the role of the mediator to find an accepted common ground between the employees (McKenzie, 2015). Mediators can be provided under the Australian Fair Work Commission as impartial actors during this process (Dunn, 2014). Intervention is a staged process which enables problems regarding workplace bullying to be targeted at various junctures. Intervention strategies may adopt primary, secondary or tertiary stages in their approach. Primary stage interventions are concerned with negotiators using preventative techniques to stop negative behaviours from initially occurring. Secondary stage intervention attempts to lessen the negative impact of the event and the addition of preventative strategies to ensure that the incident doesn't relapse in the future. Finally, tertiary stage interventions help to correct any destructive impact cause by an event as well as addressing the needs of employees and re-establishing a safe workplace environment. During the intervention process, resources may be allocated to targets to help them in complete their workplace tasks (Einarsen et al., 2011).

It is important to note that victims of workplace bullying who choose to take formal or informal methods of action, may be putting themselves in a very hazardous position. A formal complaint from an employee gives management a clear indication that the victim and perpetrator are incompatible as co-workers and that action must be taken to resolve the issue. The danger for the victim of bullying behaviours is that there is no indication that they will receive support from their employer during, or after the formal complaint process. In fact, a target of workplace bullying may find themselves victimised twice if their employer sides with their bullying perpetrator. This practice occurs because the majority of bullying behaviours are committed by employees who are in a more senior position than their victims (Van Heugten, 2011; Giorgi, 2012).

To an untrained manager's eye, a complaint regarding workplace bullying can be brushed aside as conflict arising from personality differences. It is likely that a workplace bully who remains unpunished will continue to victimise employees until an organisation chooses to intervene. It is unfortunate there are many working environments in both New Zealand and Australia that lack the institutional knowledge and strict policies to successfully intervene or find resolutions to issues regarding workplace bullying (Blackwood et al., 2013). This problem is amplified when a target of bullying behaviours is employed within an organisational setting which fails to provide adequate support strategies for their employees. Conversely an organisation that provides their employees with a supportive working environment that has attentive managers and rigid bullying policies will witness a reduction in observed bullying behaviours and employee victimisation (Skogstad et al., 2011).

Targeted individuals who wish to resolve their ill treatment in a working environment that offers little support face an uphill struggle. Van Heugten's (2013) study of seventeen New Zealand social workers who had become victimised by workplace bullies found that the majority of targets had approached their managers regarding the situation, but many failed to receive an adequate level of support. Five employees decided to take further action and were involved in unsuccessful legal enquiries after having made formal complaints regarding their treatment. Employees who cited to their managers that they wanted to take leave as a result of their treatment were met with distain upon their arrival at work (Van Heugten, 2013).

With the exclusion of resignation, undertaking legal proceedings remain the final option remaining for employees who have received unsatisfactory results from mediatory and intervening methods. However, the formal complaint system in New Zealand remains problematic for many victims of workplace bullying. The current legal framework regarding workplace bullying requires a victimised target to present sufficient evidence to assert that their bully's actions were damaging in their approach. Additionally, a victim is forced to reflect on their treatment by their perpetrator to establish satisfactory evidence. This requires the victim to remember events which may have dated back many months, with events that may have seemed unstipulated in terms of their intent at the time. This requirement is one of the reasons why workplace bullying remains severely underreported (Blackwood et al., 2013).

Workplace bullying victims in Australia are able to file an application for employee reparation if their treatment has resulted in negative health consequences (McKenzie,

2015). Australia's Fair Work Act 2009 aids in keeping Australian workplaces responsible for unwarranted or unfair employee dismissals. Cases under the act are consequently only examined once a claimant's employment tenure has concluded within an organisation (Blackwood et al., 2013). The focus of this legislation is to keep Australian organisations concerned with providing safe work environments for their employees, rather than paying compensation for those who have been targeted by workplace bullies (Ballard & Easteal, 2014).

2.9 Legislation in New Zealand and Australia

Similarities exist in the legislation of New Zealand and Australia regarding the problem of workplace bullying. Both countries possess legal systems which have been derived from British common law. Australia has adopted a more matured approach to workplace bullying regulations. Most notably, a number of states in Australia have introduced statutes to effectively criminalise the practice of workplace bullying. This has resulted in a substantial development that moves towards coordinating health and safety regulations across Australia. New Zealand policymakers have not introduced new decrees, choosing instead to make amendments to several legislative frameworks in an attempt to incentivise employers to provide their employees with a safe working environment (Blackwood et al., 2013).

In Australia, despite the fact that there is no detailed statute that encompasses workplace bullying, the practice is deemed illegal because organisations have a legal responsibility to provide their employees with a safe environment to work in (Askew, 2013). The 2011 Australian Work Health and Safety Act (WHS) requires that employers must show a duty of care towards their employee's wellbeing. Employers are responsible for creating a safe organisational environment for their workers. The Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992) in New Zealand is not dissimilar to Australia's WHS act. The act also works towards making organisations comply with providing their employees with a safe working environment in New Zealand. The statute compels employers to identify future and present hazards that could be destructive within a workplace environment. Corrections of the legislation in 2002 incorporated the wider description of an organisational hazard to contain "a situation where a person's behaviour may be an actual or potential cause or source of harm" (Blackwood et al., 2013).

In New Zealand, the Employment Relations Act 2000 states that employers are held responsible for failing to provide employees with quick and unbiased outcomes in relation to formal complaints. Victims who experience physical or psychological harm as a result of being targeted by workplace bullies, may have the grounds to lodge for compensation under the act. Employees can claim unfair dismissal when they are terminated by the rule of their employer. This approach to unjust employee dismissal is not dissimilar from the policies of Australia's 2009 Fair Work Commission (formerly Fair Work Act) (Blackwood et al., 2013). The introduction of the Fair Work Commission 2009 in Australia brought employees who were covered by the statute an additional level of protection. The act overviews the resolution practices of mediation and intervention. The statute additionally incorporates collective disputes and contests regarding concerns of unfair employee dismissal (McKenzie, 2015). If an employee wishes to make a formal request regarding the unfair termination of their employment they must file their claim within 60 days for action to be taken by a Fair Work Commissioner (Riley, 2011).

The Fair Work Commission (FWC), brings Australian employees an additional level of support. The Australian FWC is able arrange mediation problems to resolve workplace conflicts. A mediator will be provided by the (FWC) for this purpose. The mediator will explain to the parties involved, their position in the resolution process and how the mediation will be directed. Both parties will be given the opportunity to give details of what transpired and what outcome they wish to achieve from the resolution process. The mediator will attempt to assist the parties in finding a solution by distinguishing a middle ground where both parties are satisfied. The FWC can call for a conference or hearing to be arranged if it is felt that mediation would not be a suitable resolution process for the situation. A private conference or public hearing can be used when the FWC wants to cease workplace bullying behaviours within an organisation. The parties who are attending a conference or hearing will be notified of any relevant information in writing (Dunn, 2014).

An issue remains in the regulation of workplace bullying behaviours. In order for a workplace bullying case to be considered, a victim must be repeatedly exposed to bullying practices. Under legal procedure, it can sometimes be very difficult for a victimised employee to provide sufficient evidence or their bullying experiences. Additionally, the WHS law, or any other Australian statue for that matter, does not clarify the number of times that an employee needs to be exposed to bullying practices before they can considered a victim of repetitive bullying. This leaves a great deal of ambiguity over what

constitutes as repeated exposure to workplace bullying. An individual who suffers psychological harm from workplace bullies could be unable to build a case because their experiences of bullying were not frequent enough to form a pattern (Chan-Mok et al., 2014).

2.10 The importance of media reports and influence on public opinion

This study focused on media articles from both New Zealand and Australia to see how workplace bullying is conceptualised in Australasian media sources. The content of media sources is important as editors, writers and broadcasters have the chance to educate their viewers, readers and listeners about social issues of which they have little knowledge, through a variety of mediums. Happer & Piloa's research, (2013) identified that audiences who a viewed a media source with little background knowledge of the issue were more inclined to alter their perception of the issue after observing the media source. Audiences who already had some background knowledge on the subject were less likely to alter their opinion after viewing the media source (Happer & Philoa, 2013). An audience who is interested in the practice of workplace bullying would be inclined to read media sources regarding new anti-bullying legislation and leadership strategies to help managers to develop methods of combating various workplace bullying behaviours. Media articles additionally provide an excellent opportunity to educate those suffering from workplace bullying about the various approaches that are available for them to use to stop the problem. The media reports used in this study are available to be read by anyone, be they victims of workplace bullying or policy makers in parliament. Australasian media reports concerning workplace bullying behaviours and strategies to combat the problem brings a greater depth of knowledge to both New Zealand and Australian employees in an area where it is exceedingly needed (Blackwood et al., 2013).

3. Study

3.1 Aim

The aim of this analysis is to see how Australasian media sources conceptualise the topic of workplace bullying. The study sought to discover whether workplace bullying is portrayed as an interpersonal problem, between a perpetrator and victim, or a problem which is influenced heavily by the work environment. This is important, as media portrayals of bullying have the potential to influence the perceptions of workplace bullying causality and prevention in society. The study considers the research problem from the perspective of the work-environment hypothesis, which suggests that bullying is an outcome of the work environment, and components within an organisation, including leadership style, culture and protocol, may influence the prevalence and severity of workplace bullying (Einarsen et al., 1994).

3.2 Methodology

200 articles which related to the concept of workplace bullying from New Zealand and Australian media outlets were used in this study. A comprehensive examination was required in this analysis, consequently it was determined that a total of 200 sources were needed. New Zealand and Australia media sources were able to be grouped together in this manner because of the similarities in societal values, the strong economic association that exists between the two countries, and the likenesses in Australasian legislative frameworks in regards to workplace bullying practices (Blackwood et al., 2013). Articles were collected from a wide range of Australasian media sources including The Sydney Morning Herald, The New Zealand Herald, ABC Australia, The Guardian, The Courier, and The Gold Coast Bulletin. 100 articles were taken from New Zealand and Australian publications respectively and deliberately so that any outlying differences in the findings of each country could be determined. Articles were pulled from New Zealand and Australia news databases using the search term 'workplace bullying.'

Each selected Australasian media article was combed for a series of key-word terms which related to various aspects of workplace bullying. The following 11 key-word terms were devised for this analysis after an initial review of workplace bullying literature. This

process was done under the guidance of Prof. Tim Bentley who is an expert in the field of workplace bullying.

Table 1: *Key-word Search Terms*

Complaint	Culture	Environment
Harassment	Hazard	Intervention
Leadership	Legislation	Mediation
Policy	Risk	

The majority of the media articles collected contained at least one key-word term. Of the 200 Australasian media sources that were examined, only 21 sources had zero key-word terms.

NVivo, a software program which enables users to identify key themes or words in a large number of sources was utilised for this research. Once it had been determined that the articles were from a New Zealand or Australian source and did not date past 2010, the media sources were transferred into NVivo. Articles were not searched for key-word terms prior to their transference to NVivo. Once they had been moved to NVivo for analysis, each article was labelled with the date it was published, the name of the media outlet it was derived from, and whether it was written in New Zealand or Australia. The name and frequency of the key-word term which appeared in a selected article was also recorded. Leximancer, a robust software program which enables relationships between words to be examined was used to find how the key-word terms interrelated. The 200 media articles were encoded into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet before being loaded into Leximancer as a comma separated values file. Following this, a concept map of the aforementioned key-word terms was drawn up to establish the word terms that appeared to be interrelated. As the work-environment hypothesis underpinned this analysis, the words that were closely related to the key-word term 'environment' were of particular interest.

For an article to be considered for this study, it was required to pass a number of rigid screening tests. No articles originating from an academic source were used in this analysis and furthermore, selected reports must have originated and been a publication from either a New Zealand or Australian media source. Additionally, the article needed to be published during or after the year 2010 to be valid for this analysis. Subsequently, the

articles collected for this study were dated between March 2011 and November 2015. Finally, it was a prerequisite that the collected Australasian media articles had to be available for public consumption.

4.0 Findings

In this analysis of 200 Australasian media sources, the key-word terms "complaint", "harassment" and "culture" appeared most frequently. From the work-environment hypothesis view, it was expected that the word terms which related to an organisational environment such as "culture", "environment", and "leadership" would be reported regularly in this study. Although the key-word "environment" was also reported at a moderate level in New Zealand media articles, it was found at a low frequency in Australian media sources. "Leadership" was reported very infrequently amongst all Australasian articles. This was a surprising result, considering the extensive amount of literature coverage on the key-word in regards to workplace bullying. The findings show that the word-term "policy" was found at a moderate rate within Australasian media sources. The word terms "hazard" and "risk" were strongly associated through a Leximancer analysis. Both key-words were reported at a moderate level in this analysis. "Mediation" and "intervention" were the most infrequently reported key-word terms in this study. This was a concerning result, as "complaint", the most frequent key-word regularly leads to secondary workplace bullying resolution processes such as "mediation" and "intervention". This indicates that Australasian media sources are more likely to report the acts of bullying rather than the influences of the work environment or the processes used to resolve instances of workplace bullying.

4.1 Complaint

Table: 2. *Complaint*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
48	42	90

Complaints consist of formal and non-formal methods of the bullying resolution process. Complaints frequently lead to conflict and further secondary bullying resolutions processes such as mediation or intervention (Kemp, 2014). Organisations need to ensure that they address the interpersonal dispute, or bullying behaviours that led to a complaint being filed. Furthermore, managers who are in charge of investigating must implement

follow up processes after a complaint has been received. For the complaint resolution process to be successful, an organisation must have a prepared strategy for the event to insure that the victims of workplace bullying are treated fairly (Jenkins, 2011). It is possible for the further victimisation of an employee to occur if a perpetrator is angered by their target's filing of a formal complaint and managers are unable to step in to resolve the issue (Karatuna, 2015).

4.2 Culture

Table: 3. *Culture*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
27	32	59

The organisational culture of a workplace encapsulates appropriate workplace norms, rules and policies (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). Workplace bullying can become normative if the problem is ignored or remains unresolved in a workplace culture. Organisations who create a culture of pressure and strict compliance often experience elevated levels of bullying behaviours (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Some organisations enable or encourage a culture of workplace bullying if organisational goals are being met. Furthermore, some organisational cultures are willing to foster aggressive managers who are able to motivate their subordinates (Pilch & Turska, 2015). An organisational culture can be changed over time if supported frequently, and continuously by managers and senior employees (Olive & Cangemi, 2015).

4.3 Environment

Table: 4. *Environment*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
13	28	41

The environment of an organisation is built through legislation, its employees, styles of leadership and by policies that managers choose to implement. Like organisational culture, the environment of a workplace can be changed through positive and negative influences. Senior managers, leaders and human resource personal are responsible for ensuring that the organisational environment of a workplace remains both positive and supportive. The presence of a disruptive behaviour like workplace bullying is indicative that leaders and human resource managers are failing their responsibility to provide their employees with a safe organisational environment to work in (Fox & Cowan, 2015). In this analysis of Australasian media sources, there was a large discrepancy between New Zealand and Australian articles regarding the key-word "environment". The word term was mentioned at a moderate level in New Zealand articles, and by comparison, Australian sources reported the key-word at a low level. This is an indication that New Zealand articles include elements of a work environment in the context of workplace bullying at a higher rate than their Trans-Tasman neighbours.

4.4 Harassment

Table: 5. *Harassment*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
35	45	79

Harassment is comprised of the physical or verbal mistreatment of a targeted employee which is based on their ethnicity, beliefs, age, sexuality, gender or additional protected entitlement. It is considered commonplace for a perpetrator of harassment to be of an elevated hierarchal position within a workplace which entrusts power in comparison to their victim (Martin & Martin, 2010). Reports of harassment are widespread in the Australian nursing industry, however the practice remains shrouded and under-reported. It is common for workers who are employed under a stressful workplace environment to experience elevated levels of harassment behaviours. Employees that are afflicted by harassment may be unaware of any strategy that can improve their situation or fail to recognise that they have fallen victim to workplace harassment (Hamlin & Gilmour, 2005). New Zealand's Human Rights Act 1993 works to protect employees from

harassment behaviours. Those who are harassed at work are able to take legal action against their perpetrator (Blackwood et al., 2013).

4.5 Hazard

Table: 6. *Hazard*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
6	12	18

The term hazard relates to a working environment which is dangerous for employees to work within. Revisions made to the New Zealand Health and Safety in Employment Act in 2002 created a wider description of hazard to contain "a situation where a person's behaviour may be an actual or potential cause or source of harm" (Blackwood et al., 2013). There is evidence that governing bodies in both New Zealand and Australia are beginning to implement additional changes to legislation as lawmakers realise how hazardous workplace stressors can be on employees (Van Heuten, 2010).

4.6 Intervention

Table: 7. *Intervention*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
6	4	10

Intervention strategies can be primary, secondary or tertiary by design. Primary stage interventions focus on preventing negative behaviours or actions from happening. The Secondary intervention stage works to lessen the negative impacts and stop any harmful events from reoccurring. Finally, tertiary stage interventions strive to amend the negative implications of the occurrence, and to rebuild a safe environment for workers to operate within (Einarsen et al., 2011). It is important for negotiators involved in intervention strategies to follow up any intervention process to ensure that the practice is effective (Saam, 2010).

4.7 Leadership

Table: 8. *Leadership*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
9	13	22

An organisation's working environment and future can be influenced by the style or type of leadership that is appointed. An effective leader who is dedicated to the wellbeing of their employees can implement strategies to both reduce incidences of workplace bullying behaviours and create methods to intervene against oppressing perpetrators (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). Hoel et al. (2010) found that autocratic, tyrannical and laissez faire styles of leadership could be associated with a rise in workplace bullying behaviours (Hoel et al., 2010). Conversely, a transformational style of leadership has been proven not only to increase employee trust in management, but to reduce instances of workplace conflict and bullying within a workplace environment (Astrauskaite et al., 2015). Considering the wealth of literature on leadership, in relation to the management of workplace bullying, the infrequent presence of the key-word is surprising.

4.8 Legislation

Table: 9. *Legislation*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
16	9	25

Legislation comprises of the imposed legal statutes that function to ensure that an organisation is providing their employees with a safe working environment. Both New Zealand and Australia have legislation derivative from common law which is designed to keep employees protected. New Zealand has both a Health and Safety in Employment Act and an Employment Relations Act (2000) which is used to protect workers (Blackwell & Bentley, 2013). Australia has subsequently adopted a more mature level of regulation with the Work Health and Safety Act (2011) and Fair Work Australia (2009), which manages the negotiation of workplace conflicts and intervention practices. The country

has also taken steps to criminalise workplace bullying in a number of states (McKenzie, 2015).

4.9 Mediation

Table: .10 *Mediation*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
6	12	18

Mediation is an interpersonal secondary solution to workplace bullying, where both the perpetrator and victim are brought together in an attempt to resolve the issue. The process enables both participants an opportunity to discuss the problem whilst under the supervision of an impartial mediator. An ideal conclusion of the mediation process is that the meeting is co-operative and not stress-inducing for either party (McKenzie, 2015). Mediators must be conscious of any differences in the hierarchal position of the participants. This is necessary for a subordinate so they are not held at a disadvantage during the resolution process (Jenkins, 2011). Some theorists dispute the effectiveness of mediation as a solution to workplace bullying because the process is directed on forthcoming relationships, whilst failing to deal with past workplace bullying behaviours (Saam, 2010).

4.10 Policy

Table: 11. *Policy*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
19	22	41

Policy is a statement of the organisation's position on what is acceptable and unacceptable in relation to behaviour at work. The concept is related to the organisational procedure which is utilised by a company to protect their employees from harmful workplace activities. Policies are used both to resolve workplace problems, and as deterrents to future employee behaviours which may be detrimental to co-workers. An organisation who is dedicated to providing their employees with a safe working environment will

already have predetermined policies of preclusion and intervention in place for instances of workplace bullying. Resilient pre-set policies can enable an organisation to identify and resolve problems such as employee conflict or workplace bullying in a more simplified manner (Van Heuten, 2010).
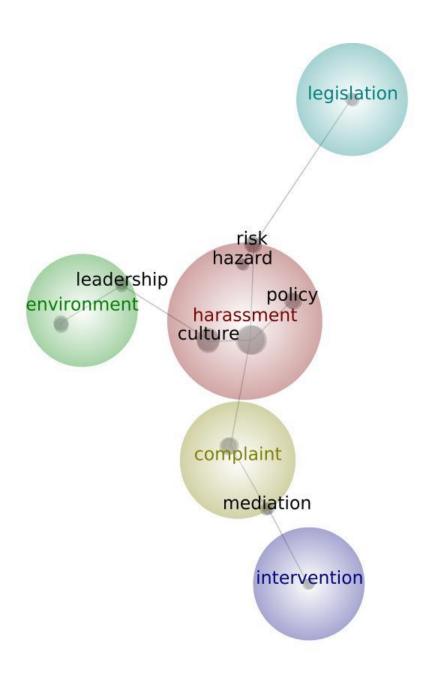
4.11 Risk

Table: 12. *Risk*		
Frequency within 100 Australian media articles	Frequency within 100 New Zealand media articles	Frequency within 200 Australasian media articles
24	21	45

Risk concerns the level of potential harm that employees are threatened with in a workplace environment. Organisations who are committed to the safety and wellbeing of their employees will address any issues that could cause a worker to experience mental or physical distress. Workplaces that do not have strategies to successfully resolve incidences of workplace bullying or employee conflict are creating a high risk environment for their employees. Furthermore, workers who are employed in a high risk environment are more susceptible to becoming victimised by workplace bullies (Chan-Mok et al., 2014).

4.12 Leximancer analysis

Figure 1: A Leximancer analysis of key-word terms found in Australasian media sources

In this Leximancer analysis it is evident that a number of key-word terms used in this study of Australasian media reports are closely associated. The word term "complaint" was found to be closely associated with the workplace resolution processes "mediation", and to a lesser extent "intervention". This was expected as complaints of workplace bullying will often lead to a mediation process which involves the targets of bullying behaviours, bullying perpetrators and a mediatory party (Kemp, 2014). The key-word "harassment" was strongly associated with the word terms "policy" and "culture". This finding was not surprising as workplace bullying behaviours such as harassment are reported frequently in unsupportive organisational cultures and where policies fail to prevent workplace bullying from occurring (Van Heuten, 2010). An alternative explanation is the harassment, having legal remedies in law, are more likely than bullying to be the subject of organisational policy and risk management practices. The key-words "Risk" and "hazard" were very closely associated, and were also closely related to harassment. This was anticipated as both terms relate to the level of danger or threats an employee faces in an organisational environment and both relate to systems of organisational management of harassment (Giorgi, 2012). "Leadership" is closely associated with the word term "environment". This would be expected from a work-environment hypothesis perspective, where leadership behaviour, or leadership styles can have an impact on both an organisational environment, and the level of bullying behaviours within a workplace (Hoel et al., 2010). The final key-word "legislation" was not closely associated with the other key-words used in this analysis.

5. Discussion

The key-word 'complaint' was the most frequently reported word term in this study, appearing in 44.5 percent of the 200 examined Australasian media sources. There was little differentiation between New Zealand and Australian media articles regarding the frequency of the word. The high incidence of this key-word is unsurprising. It reflects the fact that Australasian media sources are reporting incidences where a victim of workplace bullying files a complaint against their perpetrator. A complaint lodged by a targeted employee ensures that management becomes aware of the situation, furthermore it is the preliminary step to workplace bullying resolution processes such as mediation or other forms of intervention (Kemp, 2014). Looking at the results of the Leximancer analysis, it is evident that key-word "Complaint" has a strong association with the word term "mediation" and, to a lesser extent "intervention". As a result of this close association to the term "complaint", and because workplace complaints often lead to secondary mediation or intervention processes, it was anticipated that the key-words "mediation" and "intervention" would also be frequently reported in the examined Australasian media sources. This expectation was unfulfilled, as the word terms "mediation" and "intervention" were the most infrequently reported key-words in this analysis. This is an indication that whilst Australasian media sources are reporting the word "complaint" frequently, they are failing to mention the most common workplace bullying resolution processes "mediation" and "intervention" in their articles.

"Harassment' was the second most frequently reported key-word term in this analysis of 200 Australasian media sources. The high incidence of this this key-word is an indication that subjection to harassment behaviours is a problem for many New Zealand and Australian employees, although it is unclear whether these reports are related to bullying, (i.e. psychological harassment') or harassment more specifically. Furthermore, the high prevalence of the word suggests that Australasian media sources are more inclined to report instances of the bullying problems, rather than the solutions to bullying behaviours. The key-word term 'harassment' was reported at a higher frequency in articles from a New Zealand media source. This discrepancy may be the result of a larger number of harassment cases in New Zealand workplaces, or because employees have legal remedies to address harassment behaviours through The Employment Relations Act and the Human Rights Acts (Blackwell & Bentley, 2013). "Harassment" was found to be closely

associated with a number of key-word terms including "culture", "policy", "hazard", and "risk" in a Leximancer analysis.

The key-word "culture" was reported in over a quarter of New Zealand and Australian media sources. This finding is significant, and it indicates that Australasian media sources are linking the key-word "culture", a term that relates to levels of support in an organisational environment, to instances of workplace bullying. "Culture" is evidently also a key-word term which relates directly to the work-environment hypothesis, which has been assumed in this analysis. Examining the Leximancer model, it is evident that the key-word "culture" is strongly associated with the word "harassment". Through the assessment of literature concerning organisational culture, it is apparent that a poor working culture can increase the occurrence of workplace bullying behaviours such as harassment within an organisation (Fox & Cowan, 2015; Van Heuten, 2010).

"Environment" was recorded at a moderate level in this analysis of Australasian media reports. Appearing in a total of 41 articles, the key-word term was recorded in few Australian sources, but was present in over a quarter of New Zealand media articles. This finding is significant as it indicates that the authors of a number of New Zealand media sources may understand the impact that an organisational environment can have on workplace bullying behaviours. Evidently the key-word term "environment" is directly related to the work-environment hypothesis. Analysis of literature regarding workplace bullying indicates that environmental variables can have a great influence on the regularity of workplace bullying (Fox & Cowan, 2015; Einarsen et al., 2011). Furthermore, both positive and negative leadership practices were considered to have a large impression on a workplace environment (Astrauskaite et al., 2015). This is congruent with the findings of this study's Leximancer analysis in which the key-word term "leadership" was closely associated with "environment."

The word term "leadership" was reported very infrequently in this analysis appearing in just 22 of the 200 Australasian media articles. This is a concerning result considering the plethora of new research on leadership styles and their influence on the prevalence of workplace bullying (Hoel et al. 2010; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). This finding suggests that New Zealand and Australian media sources are not cognisant of the importance of leadership practices in regards to workplace bullying. Consequently, media sources are failing to pass this knowledge on to their readers. Additionally, "leadership" is a key component in the work-environment hypothesis (Einarsen et al., 2011).

"Risk" was reported at a moderate rate, and was present in 45 of the 200 Australasian media articles examined. The word relates to the health and safety of employees within an organisational setting (Mok et al., 2014). The key-word term appeared in under a quarter of media articles, indicating that the authors of Australasian media sources are infrequently reporting that the key-word "risk" has an impact on workplace bullying. In a Leximancer analysis the word "risk" had a strong association with the key-word term "hazard", and to a lesser extent "harassment". This suggests that employees could become victims to harassment behaviours when working in an environment which fails to manage risk effectively.

"Hazard" was reported irregularly in this analysis, appearing in just 18 Australasian media sources. The infrequent presence of this key-word may suggest that Australasian media sources perceive threats to an employee's wellbeing as a health and safety issue rather than one of workplace bullying. Furthermore, hazard management in New Zealand and Australia is commonly referred to as risk management which may have resulted in the low representation of the word.

The key-word "legislation" was reported sporadically in this analysis, indicating that Australasian media sources are failing to educate their readers about the legal statutes that protect them from bullying behaviours. The word term was present in just 16 Australian media sources, a much lower number than was anticipated. With the criminalisation of workplace bullying behaviours in a number of Australian states, and the introduction of the Fair Work Act in 2009, it was expected that the key-word would be frequently observed in Australian media articles. In a Leximancer analysis "legislation" was not strongly associated with any of the other key-word terms that were used in this study.

The key-word term "policy" was reported at a similarly moderate level in this analysis, appearing in 41 of the selected articles. The infrequency of this word suggests that Australasia media sources only sometimes acknowledge the impact that organisational policy can have on workplace bullying. Like the word term "risk", "policy" had an association with the key-word "harassment". This is an indication that an ineffective workplace policy, or absence of policy could lead to an increase in harassment behaviours. It also suggest that organisations may have harassment policies to address bullying, whereas specific workplace bullying policy is thought to be more effective (Bentley et al., 2009).

In this analysis of Australasian media sources "culture" was the only key-word term which relates to the work-environment hypothesis perspective that was reported at a high level. The word terms "environment" and "leadership" were reported at moderate and low levels. This indicates that whilst the word "culture" was used in many workplace bullying articles, there is no indication that the Australasian media sources collected conceptualise the problem of workplace bullying as a product of the workplace environment. This finding suggests, that media sources in New Zealand and Australia perceive workplace bullying as a problem which is influenced by the behaviour of employees, rather than the work environment of an organisation. With Australasian media sources failing to hold organisations accountable for occurrences of workplace bullying, only legal processes in Australasia, which frequently take place once a target has resigned, hold employers responsible for providing their employees with a safe environment to work in.

6. Limitations and suggestions for further research

This analysis was subject to a number of limitations. The most important of these is that only articles from New Zealand and Australia that could be accessed freely were considered. The findings of this study may have differed if articles that required a subscription fee were included. Furthermore, this study was limited by the potential for selection bias. Articles used in this analysis were found using the search term "workplace bullying" and a number of related terms as indicated from review of workplace bullying literature and expert option. It is possible that different word terms could have generated a different dataset and impacted the findings of this study.

Based on the findings of this analysis, it is recommended that a number of key-word terms should be added to any future studies regarding Australasian media perceptions of workplace bullying. Support is a word term that is attributed to assisting behaviours from managers, leaders and co-workers. Furthermore, level of support is a function of a workplace's environment, and literature findings suggest that support from managers and co-workers can reduce instances of workplace bullying (Rosseau et al., 2014; Van Heugten, 2013). Victimised is another key-word that should be added to future studies. The word term relates to those targeted by workplace bullying behaviours and could potentially relate to the key-words "harassment" and "complaint" which were used in this study. Inclusion of the key-word victimised could also help to identify the percentage of media articles which refer to targets of workplace bullying behaviours.

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