

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MANIFESTATION OF HORIZONTAL
WORKPLACE BULLYING IN THE K-12 SETTING**

by

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Sarah Shaw, Ed.D.

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Horizontal workplace bullying is defined as hostile, aggressive, and harmful behavior between co-workers who are positioned on the same level of the organization's hierarchical ladder (e.g., teacher-to-teacher) via attitudes, actions, words, and/or behaviors (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006; Thobaben, 2007). The National Educational Association reported that 31.7% of school faculty and staff stated that they have been bullied by a colleague (Bradshaw & Figiel, 2012). This study examined teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting through a constructivist framework.

Study participants included six teachers who were currently teaching in the K-12 setting. Five of these teachers self-identified as victims of horizontal workplace bullying. One of the teachers self-identified as a witness of horizontal workplace bullying. The teachers completed a 30-45 minute, in-person interview. Interviews included 20 open-ended questions detailing the descriptions of perceptions, reactions, coping, and effects of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting. Line-by-line qualitative coding for known constructs in the workplace bullying literature (e.g., behavior, coping, reactions, effects) guided the analysis.

A review of the findings uncovered common perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying, common behaviors, reactions, emotions, coping strategies, and effects of horizontal workplace bullying on teachers. The findings revealed that teacher victims perceive professional jealousy and voluntarily working beyond the contract as antecedents for becoming a target of horizontal workplace bullying. Other findings suggest that teachers cope with horizontal workplace bullying by relying on a support network and by increasing alcohol consumption. The effects of horizontal workplace bullying are psychological, physical, and social in nature, yet teachers often choose to do nothing to combat this heinous behavior.

Although there is much literature about workplace bullying, research on horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting is lacking. This study adds to the limited body of literature and includes implications and recommendations for practice and future research. School administrators must continue to research, develop policies, and define the technical problems and adaptive challenges that face teachers and administrators in order to successfully navigate this challenging and detrimental phenomenon (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

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PREFACE

Upon graduating high school, my grandmother gave me some advice. She wisely shared, “Education is something that no one can ever take away from you, so get as much of it as you can.” I have now reached a point in my educational career where I have attained the highest educational degree. This was a challenging process that was not completed alone. To those special people who have offered their encouragement and support throughout this long journey, I sincerely thank you.

To Dr. Kerr, my dissertation and research advisor: thank you for being so responsive to my many emails and questions, providing much guidance and support. You have taught me to take risks and to be more confident in my thinking. You provided support when I was stuck, critical feedback to create a stronger study, and encouragement when I thought there was no way I could finish this project. You have been a wonderful mentor throughout this process and for this, I am forever grateful.

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To my participants, thank you for volunteering to tell your story. I hope that this study gives you and others a voice and brings to light the seriousness of these harrowing experiences. Continue to do the wonderful things that you do every day for the children you teach.

To my “Pitt Crew” - Anthony, Chris, Mandy, Marc, and Rachel. I have enjoyed sharing every moment of this process with you. I will never forget our laughs, tears, rants, and other completely ridiculous antics. Without your support and friendship, I would not have made it through this program. Thank you for always being there!

To my husband, Bill. Thank you for your love, unwavering encouragement, and patience for the past three years. Thank you for giving me hugs, wiping away tears, and providing tough love when necessary. Without your support, patience, cooking, cleaning, and dog walking, I would not have been able to finish this project. Thank you for always cheering me on. I look forward to hanging out on the couch with you without my laptop!

To all the other special people in my life (friends, family, colleagues, mentors) - thank you for believing in me. I am fortunate to be surrounded by so many wonderful people who have cared for, supported, mentored, and pushed me to be the best that I can be. To say “thank

you for everything” seems inadequate. You have touched my life in one way or another, which has shaped who I am today. For that I am eternally grateful.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As Principal Ballard entered the faculty room, she overheard a conversation between two teachers.

“I was seriously thinking about choosing an Action Research Project for my evaluation next year. I have been intrigued by the idea of a flipped classroom and how it could be beneficial to the 5th grade students. I’ve read a lot about it, I have observed teachers in other buildings using it, and it is very engaging! I’ve even started to think about how I can incorporate flipped lessons into the Social Studies and Science curriculum,” said Carla, a fifth grade teacher.

Bon, her fourth grade colleague and friend replied, “I think that’s a great idea! Especially since the district is pushing the use of technology in a transformative way.”

“I know, I think so too. I’m just a little bit worried about my teammates finding out about it,” Carla continued. “They’ll most likely hate it because it involves more work, and they’ll accuse me of making them look bad again, like they did when I started my classroom blog.”

“Oh yeah, I remember that,” Bon laughed. “Didn’t they stop sharing their lessons with you after that?”

“Yes,” Carla replied, “and they also purposefully excluded me, stopped inviting me out to lunch, criticized everything I said and did, and would often yell at me at faculty meetings when I spoke up. They were so nasty! They also made references to me being Ms. Ballard’s pawn and called me the assistant principal. They had me so worked up over how they were treating me

that I thought about transferring to a different grade level. I know that the kiddos will love it, and I know that it is an effective teaching strategy, but I just hated how uncomfortable I feel around them when they act like that. I'm talking sleepless nights, my anxiety was through the roof, and the thought of coming to work made me sick to my stomach. I've spent two years repairing my reputation and mending my relationship with my teammates, and I don't know if I want to consciously put myself back in a situation like that again."

Later that week, Carla met with Ms. Ballard to discuss her year-end evaluation, review this year's performance, and set goals for next year. Keeping in mind the conversation that she overheard in the faculty room, Ms. Ballard asked Carla about her goals for next year.

"Well, I would like to start thinking about incorporating more technology into my classroom, you know, something to really get the kiddos excited and engaged," Carla answered.

Ms. Ballard responded, "I think that sounds great! Tell me more about what you're thinking. Were you thinking about making this an action research?"

Carla replied, "No. Not really. I don't really have a serious plan yet. There were a few ideas that I had been tossing around, but I haven't committed to anything, and I'm not sure that they'll actually go anywhere."

Ms. Ballard responded, "Carla, you are a very creative and ambitious teacher, and very much a teacher leader. I think you have a lot to offer our staff and would like to see you working on this project. Stop second-guessing yourself."

As this case illustrates, teachers can be subject to horizontal bullying or teacher-to-teacher bullying in their workplace. A Google search of "workplace bullying" produced over 8 million results in less than .3 seconds. Adult bullying in the workplace is a ubiquitous phenomenon that must be addressed.

1.1 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to the 2014 Workplace Bullying Institute's *U. S. Workplace Bullying Survey*, 27% of American employees experience bullying behavior at work, 21% have been a witness, and 72% are aware that it is happening in their workplace (Namie, 2014). Leymann (1996) reports that one in seven adult suicides are a result of bullying at work. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in Ireland found that Education, Public Administration, and the Health and Social Work sectors have the highest incidents of workplace bullying out of any other surveyed sector (O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007). Education topped the list at 14.0%, causing the ESRI to classify Education as a high-risk profession. The ESRI also found that bullying by colleagues was the highest reported workplace bullying interaction in the public sector. More specifically related to teachers, the National Educational Association, the largest union and one of the most powerful political forces in the United States, reported that 31.7% of school faculty and staff stated that they have been bullied by a colleague, based on the results of the NEA Bullying Survey (Bradshaw & Figiel, 2012). According to these statistics, workplace bullying is present in schools, affects many staff members, and the staff themselves are responsible for these actions.

1.1.1 Workplace bullying defined

As researchers continue to explore workplace bullying and its effect on employees and organizations, Rayner (1997) suggests examining bullying in relation to adult behavior and defining it in relation to specific work related behavior. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2011) define workplace bullying as follows:

Bullying at work means harassing, offending, or socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process, the bullying behavior has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal strength are in conflict. (p. 22)

The Irish Health and Safety Authority (2002), Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (2008), O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson (2007), Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2007), and O'Moore, Lynch, and Nic Daeid (2003) include "inappropriate behavior, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise...which could be reasonably regarded as undermining an individual's right to dignity at work" in their definition of workplace bullying (p. 5). Simons (2008) describes inappropriate behavior, in relation to workplace bullying, as "being humiliated or ridiculed, being ignored or excluded, being shouted at, receiving hints that you should quit your job, receiving persistent criticism, and excessive monitoring of your work" (p. E49). The definitions provided outline several distinct forms of workplace bullying.

1.1.1.1 Horizontal workplace bullying defined

More specifically related to findings in the ESRI (O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007) and NEA (2012) reports suggesting that most workplace bullying incidents occur between colleagues, it is important to define and explore the phenomenon of horizontal bullying. Horizontal workplace bullying is defined as hostile, aggressive, and harmful behavior between co-workers who are positioned on the same level of the organization's hierarchical ladder (e.g. teacher-to-teacher) via

attitudes, actions, words, and/or behaviors (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006; Thobaben, 2007). Horizontal bullying creates the perception that the bully has more power based on a variety of reasons (e.g., seniority, experience, knowledge). The definitions provided in this section outline several distinct forms of workplace bullying.

1.1.1.2 Harassment defined

To further understand this phenomenon, it is important to understand the definition of harassment in comparison to workplace bullying. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, n.d.) defines harassment as, “unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.” The EEOC continues to explain that, “to be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people.” Retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, participating in an investigation or lawsuit, or for refusing to adhere to practices that are believed to be discriminatory are also considered unlawful acts in regard to harassment (EEOC, n.d.). Most importantly, harassment differs from bullying because harassment is directed towards members of a protected class. There is also legislation such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 that has been established to enact this protection. Figure 1 conceptually represents similarities and differences between workplace bullying and harassment. Although workplace bullying and harassment, as defined by the EEOC, are closely related, the purpose of this review is to focus on the research involving workplace bullying.

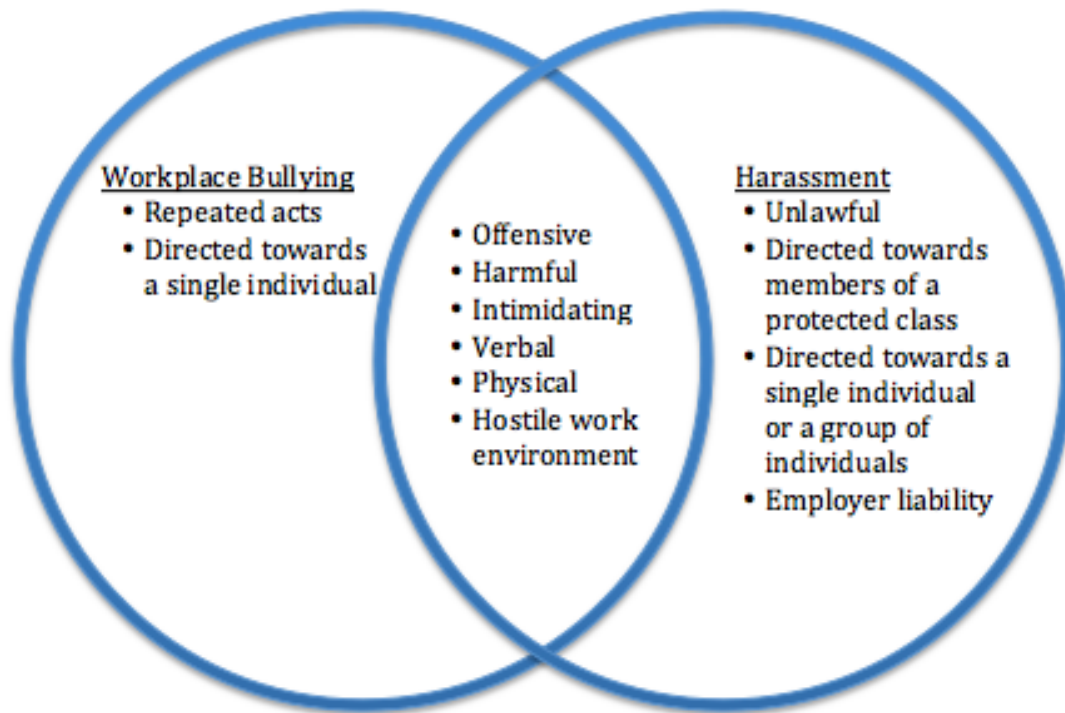


Figure 1. *Workplace Bullying vs. Harassment*

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This qualitative study explored the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting through the perspective of teachers. The study was conducted to develop a deeper understanding of this phenomenon by learning how colleagues who have experienced workplace bullying perceive horizontal bullying. By learning more about the victims' perceptions, reactions, coping strategies, and the implications on the victims' professional growth, researchers can explore further research on targeted interventions to address horizontal workplace bullying specific to the K-12 setting. These interventions could be helpful for teachers themselves, teacher unions, and school districts for combating this behavior within the organization. The

findings of this study can also serve as a driving factor for policy development for school districts and may also have broader implications for organizational culture, teachers, and students.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS EXPLORED

Although much information has been discovered about workplace bullying, the literature suggests several areas of future research. Parzefall and Salin (2010) suggest conducting more qualitative studies to learn more about workplace bullying, due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Einarsen et al. (2011) recommend exploring the evolution of workplace bullying in organizations. Future research should also lead to a better understanding of how to create a healthy and bully-free workplace culture (Einarsen et al., 2011). Table 1 outlines other suggestions for future research that are discussed further in Chapter 3.

Table 1. *Areas for Future Research and Research Questions*

| Areas for Future Research | Researcher(s) Who Suggested | Research Questions |
|---|---|---|
| What are the perceptions or reasons for bullying according to the victim or witness? | Einarsen & Skogstad 1996; Katrini et al., 2010; Lindy & Schaefer, 2010; Bradshaw & Figiel, 2012 | RQ 1: What are the victims' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying? |
| How do victims and witnesses react to horizontal bullying? Are attempts made to intervene? If so, what kind of intervention? If not, why? | Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; De Vos & Kirsten, 2015 | RQ 2: How do teacher victims react when confronted by a teacher bully? |
| What coping strategies do victims or witnesses of horizontal bullying use? | Baillien et al., 2009; De Vos & Kirsten, 2015 | RQ 3: How do teacher victims cope with workplace bullying? |
| What is the impact of horizontal bullying experiences on professional practice? | Fahie & Devine, 2012 | RQ 4: What, if any, are the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on professional growth? |

The four research questions described in Table 1 guided this study's exploration of teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal bullying in the K-12 setting.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the past two decades, there has been substantial academic and professional research on workplace bullying. Much of the advanced work originated in Scandinavia where the development of laws against workplace bullying specifically have promoted an increased government funding for research as well as an increased public awareness of the phenomenon. Some of the first Scandinavian researchers to explore bullying in the workplace include Einarsen and Skogstad (1996), Leymann (1990, 1996), and Vartia (1996). Hogh, Mikkelsen, and Hansen (2011) followed this research by exploring consequences of workplace bullying on individuals. Salin and Hoel (2011) examined the organizational causes of bullying in the workplace. Nielsen, Hetland, Matthieson, and Einarsen (2012) explored the psychological effects related to workplace bullying. Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, and Wilkes (2005); Stanley, Martin, Michel, Welton, and Nemeth (2007); McKenna, Smith, Poole, and Coverdale (2003); and Yildirim and Yildirim (2007) examined the phenomenon of horizontal bullying with a specific focus in the health sector.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss recently published literature to provide a better understanding of the workplace bullying phenomenon. This review describes the following:

1. Workplace bullying behaviors
2. The effects of workplace bullying on victims and organizations
3. Coping and workplace bullying

4. Theorized causes of workplace bullying

In addition to the above-mentioned themes, this collection of literature provides the framework for a qualitative study that will explore teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting.

This review of workplace bullying literature developed from a search that included peer reviewed articles in several databases. The articles and studies used in this review represent multiple countries and numerous professions over a thirty-six year period using the keywords: *bullying, workplace bullying, horizontal bullying, mobbing, workplace mobbing, teachers bullying, work relations, work culture, harassment, teacher harassment, teacher relationships, work environment, job satisfaction, anti-bullying programs, bully prevention at work, bully prevention at school, adult bullying, aggression among staff, teacher aggression, teacher victimization, victimization, co-worker relationships, gender bullying, bullying and power, harassment policies, bullying policies, bullying in elementary schools, coping with workplace bullying, workplace bullying antecedents.*

An overarching theme throughout this literature is that further research is necessary to gain a deeper understanding about what is causing bullying in the workplace and how employees are coping with it, in order to create targeted interventions and policy development. A qualitative study will add to the existing research by aiming to understand the perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying from victims and witnesses.

2.1.1 Workplace bullying behaviors

The behaviors associated with workplace bullying move away from the physical aggression, more associated with childhood bullying, and move towards more indirect, subtle, and covert

forms of aggression such as isolation, exclusion, belittlement, humiliation, verbal threats, and spreading rumors (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2009; Rayner, 1997; Smith, 1997). A study by the Economic & Social Research Institute (O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007) reported verbal abuse/insults, undermining, intimidation, humiliation, and being treated less favorably to be the most commonly reported workplace bullying behaviors. In a study conducted at Staffordshire University with part-time University students, Rayner (1997) reported that 53% of these students described being bullied at work through intimidation, work overloading, belittling remarks, inaccurate accusation, persistent criticism, and ignoring as the most reported behaviors. Table 2 lists workplace bullying behaviors that have been compiled throughout the research literature (O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007; Hutchinson et al. 2009; Rayner, 1997, Simon & Simon, 2006).

Table 2. *Typical Workplace Bullying Behaviors*

| Behaviors | Tactics |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Isolation and Exclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring • Excluding from conversation • Isolating from colleagues • Excluding from activities • Singling out • Silent treatment |
| Intimidation and Threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staring • Watching • Following • Shouting • Intrusion • Pestering • Spying • Stalking • Glaring • Encouraging others to turn against another • Retaliation |
| Belittlement and Humiliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumors • Gossiping • Insulting • Demeaning • Undermining • Discounting thoughts/ideas • Excessive/harsh criticism • Verbal put-downs • Degrading nick-name • Blaming • Feeling stupid/incompetent • Suggesting medical/psychological conditions • Publicizing mistakes |

Table 2 (continued)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Damaging Professional Identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacking character • Attacking ability/achievements • Demeaning work • Questioning skills • Slander • Excessive questioning • Rumors • Undermining with negative feedback • Falsely accusing of errors • Disregarding exemplary work • Offensive posters/emails • Sabotaging contribution |
| Limiting Professional Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up to fail • Ensuring failure • Being overlooked for promotion • Excluding from committees/activities • Denying/excluding professional development |
| Making Work Difficult | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocating job • Excluding from information • Isolating work opportunities • Excessive/unreasonable workload • Un-doable demands • Sabotaging work • Excessive scrutiny • Setting up to fail • Undermining with negative feedback • Blocking access to resources • Assigning unsafe work conditions |
| Economic Sanctions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting opportunity to work • Interfering with paycheck • Having to use excessive sick days |

2.1.2 Effects of workplace bullying on victims and the organization

Workplace bullying can have significant physical and psychological health effects on the victims. Namie (2003) describes four manifestations of the effects of workplace bullying: psychological, physical, social, and economic. These four manifestations are outlined in Fahie and Devine's (2012) study that analyzed 24 in-depth interviews with "self-identified" workplace bullying victims, who had experience working in an elementary school, to examine the impact of workplace bullying on primary school teachers and principals (p. 235). Fahie and Devine found that the psychological effects on the victims included feelings of being alone, fear, anxiety, loss of sense of self, isolation and vulnerability, anger, feeling upset, paranoia, self-doubt, and humiliation. One of the participants describes her anxiety and fear about her bully: "One evening I came home in the car from school and the bully was driving behind me. I was convinced she was following me. I had become so paranoid. I was wondering whose driveway I would pull into. I was afraid she was going to come after me" (p. 242).

Every participant in this study also described a physical symptom that they associated with their workplace bullying incidents. The participants listed sleeplessness, nightmares, upset stomach and digestive complications, skin irritations, and weight loss/gain. One teacher described her experience in response to the tension that she felt going to work: "I'd get up and go to work. Out the door I'd throw up, round the corner I'd throw up again, I'd have to stop the car so that I could throw up again on my way" (Fahie & Devine, 2012, p. 242). The participants also identified exclusion and isolation as social effects as well as personal financial complications, due to a change to their career trajectory, as economic effects.

Hallberg and Strandmark (2006) conducted an interview study with 20 participants, identified as workplace bullying victims. They found that the victims developed psychological

(e.g., inattentiveness, mood swings, anxiety, sleeplessness, depression, fear) and psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., hypertension, headaches, health complaints, sensitivity to sound) shortly after the bullying started. These studies suggest that workplace bullying has harmful physical and psychological effects on victims.

Workplace bullying not only affects individuals, but it can also have an effect on the organization as a whole including decreased job satisfaction, poor performance, and high levels of attrition or turn-over (Quine, 2001; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005). Bullying in the workplace can affect the culture of an organization by creating a toxic work environment which leads to low morale, decreased job satisfaction, and poor performance (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Absenteeism, turnover, attrition, and replacement could cost the organization upwards of \$50,000 per year (Hoel, Einarsen, & Cooper, 2003). The effects of workplace bullying on victims and organizations are represented graphically in Figure 2.

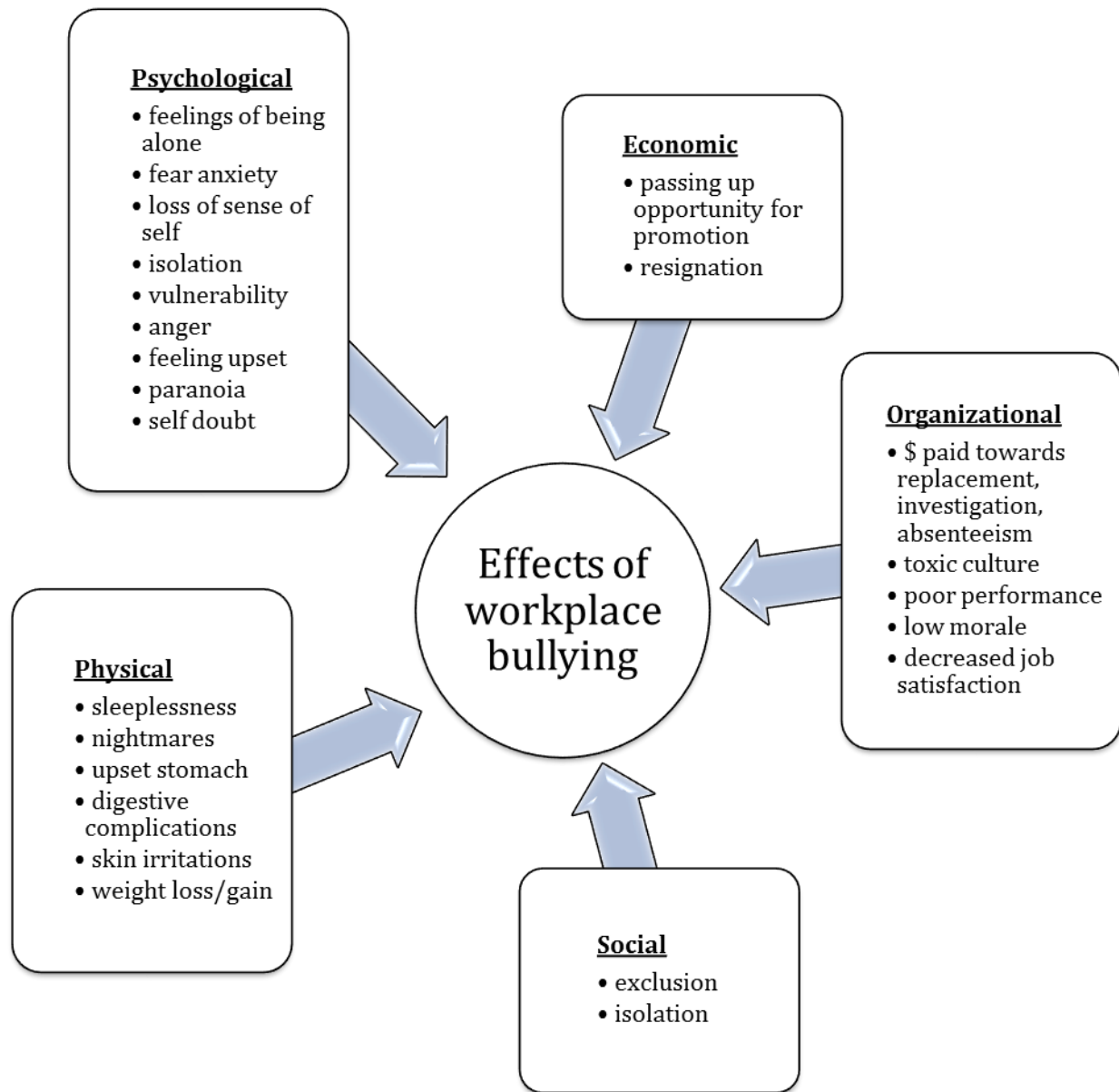


Figure 2. *Effects of Workplace Bullying on Victims and Organizations*

2.1.3 Coping and workplace bullying

Baillien et al. (2009) revisited the theoretical framework from Berkowitz's (1989) *Revised Frustration Aggression Theory and Social Interactionism* (Felson & Tedeschi, 1993) to explore a correlation between coping and workplace bullying. The Revised Frustration Aggression Theory explains that frustrations create aggressive inclinations to the degree that they produce a negative effect (Berkowitz, 1989). Felson and Tedeschi (1993) define the Social Interactionist perspective as aggressive behavior that is goal oriented and used to coerce or deter others, to achieve a positive social identity, and to attain justice. Through this perspective, anger and aggression reflect an act of social control to perceived faults. Both theories support the knowledge that bullying may develop as a result of frustration in the workplace. Baillien et al. (2009) suggest that active-inefficient coping with a strain at work can lead to frustration and aggression towards others, which in turn can contribute to becoming a perpetrator of workplace bullying. This directly corresponds to Social Interactionism (Felson & Tedeschi, 1993) and Berkowitz's (1989) Revised Frustration Aggression Theory.

On the other hand, Baillien et al. (2009) suggest that bullying may develop as a result of passive-inefficient coping strategies. Felson & Tedeschi (1993) explain that stress can cause an employee to violate expectations and social norms, which can lead other co-workers to react negatively towards the person violating these norms (Lawrence & Leather, 1999). Workplace bullying can develop as a deliberate action to the behavior that violates norms (Hoel, Rayner & Cooper, 1999).

Baillien et al. (2009) used Withey and Cooper's (1989) Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect (EVLN) model to connect workplace bullying research with other coping literature. The EVLN-model examines four reactions that employees may demonstrate when experiencing

dissatisfaction at work: exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. *Exit* describes the act of actively and destructively dealing with frustration at work by leaving the organization or scapegoating. *Voice* describes the act of actively and constructively attempting to improve frustration at work by discussing problems with a supervisor or co-worker. This can also be described as active problem solving. *Loyalty* is described as passively, but optimistically waiting for conditions within the organizations to improve, showing good organizational citizenship. *Neglect* is explained as frustrated and dissatisfied employees focusing their attention on non-work-related interests and passively allowing the conditions in the organization to deteriorate (Baillien et al., 2009). Baillien et al. (2009) found that coping with frustrations in a constructive way (voice), halts the developmental process of workplace bullying, while deconstructive coping (exit, neglect, loyalty) encourages workplace bullying.

A study conducted by Blasé, Blasé, and Du (2008) revealed that teachers were more likely to cope with workplace bullying by discussing the situation with a co-worker or family member, in lieu of a supervisor. Aquino and Thau (2009) discovered similar findings, explaining that victims typically adopt problem-focused coping strategies or emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused coping strategies include taking direct action, seeking revenge, or seeking support from others. Emotion-focused coping strategies include using humor, alcohol consumption/substance abuse, forgiveness, and doing nothing. In addition to these coping strategies, a study by INTO (2006) found that more than one tenth of their sample of teachers reported leaving their school as a direct coping mechanism for workplace bullying.

2.1.4 Theorized causes of workplace bullying

Most of the understandings of workplace bullying are drawn from theories in organizational psychology that describe bullying as a form of interpersonal conflict that stems from individual personalities and environments that are conducive to workplace bullying (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, Wilkes, 2010; Pfeffer, 2007; Seigne et al., 2007; Vardi & Weitz, 2004; Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Workplace bullying has also been described through the organizational theory (Hoel & Salin, 2003), oppression theory (Roberts, 1983), and workgroup manipulation theory (Hutchinson, 2012). These theories are discussed below.

2.1.4.1 Interpersonal and intrapersonal theory

A study conducted by Johnson, Boutain, Tsai, Beaton, & de Castro (2015), that explored managers' discourses of workplace bullying, identified the interpersonal and the intrapersonal constructs as the most prevalent perspectives in their organizations.

Interpersonal bullying is described as a breakdown in communication and/or a personality conflict between the bully and the target (Johnson et al., 2015). In the interpersonal construct, the targets are described as both vulnerable and proactive. Vulnerable targets are characterized as unassertive and passive and are described as lonely, anxious, insecure, non-teasing, and not aggressive or defensive people with inferior conflict resolution skills (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Johnson et al., 2015). Proactive targets are characterized as assertive, hot-tempered, restless, and retaliatory (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Johnson et al., 2015). Both types of targets are viewed as being part of the problem, blaming each other for poor communication skills and or exhibiting a personality that is difficult to work with.

Intrapersonal bullying was recognized as overt, with public behaviors thought to be caused by a character flaw of the bully (e.g. personality, upbringing, coping strategies, insecurity, aggressive/passive aggressive personality) (Johnson et al., 2015). Zapf and Einarsen (2011) explain that bullies act out as a way to protect their self-esteem, and because they lack social competencies and emotional control. Many justify the intrapersonal bullying behavior by citing the bully's personality as justification for their behavior.

2.1.4.2 Organizational theory

To gain a better understanding of workplace bullying, Hoel and Salin (2003) explored bullying through an organizational lens with the focus on the organization's role in triggering, enabling, and motivating bullying in the workplace. Several characteristics of an organization can lead to increased occurrences of workplace bullying. They are described below.

Leadership style, organizational culture, ethical climate, and situational factors are characteristics that contribute to a climate where workplace bullying can flourish (Samnani & Singh, 2012). Hoel and Salin (2003) describe two leadership styles that create an organizational environment where workplace bullying can thrive: *laissez-faire* and highly authoritarian. The *laissez-faire* leadership style creates an informal organizational atmosphere with lack of leadership, direction, and clear boundaries. This contributes to workplace bullying because the leader often fails to recognize and intervene in bullying cases, therefore sending the message that bullying is acceptable in the organization (Hoel & Salin, 2003). The highly authoritarian leadership style creates an organizational atmosphere that is extremely strict, condones and supports power imbalances, requires increased job demands, and uses organizational policies to gain power (Hoel & Salin, 2003). This atmosphere supports workplace bullying by creating an imbalance of power that is purposely used to gain advantage over the victim.

Workplace bullying breeds in organizations that tolerate, promote, or enable a “culture of gossip,” negative interactions between co-workers, and/or mockery (Baillien et al., 2009). Organizational hierarchy, the hierarchical structure of many workplaces, may also lead to workplace bullying by oppressing subordinates (Young, 1990). Katrinli, Atabay, Gunay, and Cangarli (2010) argue that workplace bullying has political roots, meaning that bullying behaviors occur to “serve the self-interests of the perpetrators” suggesting that employees use workplace bullying as a competitive strategy to create the perception that they have the ability to outperform their co-workers (p. 614). Salin (2003) found a positive correlation between workplace bullying and the level of perceived organizational politics, which questions the ethical issues present in organizations.

Bullying is also more likely to occur in organizations that are volatile and often undergoing change (Hoel & Salin, 2003). Change is constant in education, which may make teachers more susceptible to workplace bullying. During periods of change, employees perceive a greater sensation of increased pressure and workload (Katrinli et al., 2010). This contributes to workplace bullying because frequent change breeds an environment of uncertainty. In a volatile and often changing organization, direction and clear boundaries may dissipate, while job demands have the potential to increase, thus developing a perfect storm for the workplace bullying to breed.

2.1.4.3 Oppressed group theory

Others have explored workplace bullying through the lens of oppressed group behavior (Roberts, 1983). Paulo Freire coined the Oppressed Group Theory in 1972 to explain the conflict that existed among the colonized African population. The oppressed group theory describes the formation of a dominant and a subordinate group in an organization that stems from an

imbalance of power. Oppression occurs when the values of the subordinate group are subdued, causing the oppressed group to feel inferior since they are forced to reject their values to maintain the status quo (Freire, 1993). Roberts (2000) adds to this theory by suggesting that members of this oppressed group direct bullying behaviors horizontally, rather than vertically, due to their low self-esteem and unfavorable group identity. The oppression theory suggests that, in an effort to gain control over powerlessness, the oppressed group will exhibit horizontal bullying as an adaptive behavior (Hutchinson et al., 2006).

2.1.4.4 Workgroup manipulation theory

Contrary to the Oppressed Group Theory, Hutchinson (2012) describes perpetrators of workplace bullying as informal leaders or powerbrokers in their work group. Employees who fit this description are “popular, socially dominant and influential individuals who demonstrate high levels of social intelligence and opportunism” (Hutchinson, 2012, p. 564). Hutchinson (2012) explores workplace bullying as a form of workgroup manipulation. They outline four forms of bullying as workplace manipulation: influencing, persuading, rationalizing, and complying.

The influencing tactic describes the perpetrator as having a high social intelligence as well as understanding others’ desire to belong to a group. In this instance, the bully uses forms of relational aggression (e.g. gossip, spreading rumors, ignoring, eye rolling) to influence some and exclude others, thus harming the social status of the target. Even though the perpetrator may not appear visibly hostile, his/her goal is to frame the target as being inferior, thus diminishing the social support from the workgroup and isolating or excluding the target (Hutchinson, 2012).

As the perpetrator senses the workgroup shifting their support away from the target, they continue to be a social assassin by creating additional opportunities to undermine the target using what Hutchinson (2012) describe as persuading. Persuading can be accomplished by

manipulating the beliefs and actions of the group by spreading rumors by publically commenting on unproven inadequacies. The purpose of this form of bullying is to strengthen a core group while at the same time excluding other co-workers who are perceived as less worthy.

Rationalizing is described as a more active, hostile role that frames the target as deserving the mistreatment. This form of workgroup manipulation includes the perpetrator offering convincing arguments to other members of the workgroup in order to justify or rationalize further exclusion of the target. Targets become viewed as deserving the blame as the workgroup begins to rationalize the bullying behavior. Rationalizing behaviors include allocating less work to the target due to their “incompetence,” gossiping, and publicly rationalizing the bullying behavior (Hutchinson, 2012).

The concept of complying within the workgroup explains the phenomenon of co-workers witnessing bullying, but doing little to intervene. Hutchinson et al. (2006) explains that over time, exposure to increasing occurrences of workplace bullying can have a normative effect on the workgroup. Complying within the workgroup is supported through favorable treatment of those who support and enable workplace bullying. In this case, individuals in the workgroup are likely to comply to preserve self-interest, thus explaining why witnesses do not intervene (Hutchinson, 2012). Table 3 lists the workplace bullying theories that have been compiled throughout the research literature (Hoel & Salin, 2003; Hutchinson, 2012; Johnson et al., 2015; Roberts, 1983).

Table 3. *Workplace Bullying Theories*

| Theory | Researcher(s) and Date | Description of Theory |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Interpersonal Theory | Johnson et al. (2015) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakdown in communication and/or personality conflict between bully and target• Targets are viewed as being part of the problem.• Targets are blamed for poor communication or having a difficult personality to work with. |
| Intrapersonal Theory | Johnson et al. (2015) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overt and public behavior caused by a character flaw of the bully• Bully acts out to protect self-esteem.• Cites bully's personality as justification for behavior |
| Organizational Theory | Hoel & Salin (2003) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focuses on the role the organization plays in enabling and motivating bullying in the workplace• Organizational factors conducive to workplace bullying include: leadership style, organizational culture, ethical climate, and other situational factors. |
| Oppressed Group Theory | Roberts (1983) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The formation of a dominant and subordinate group in an organization created from an imbalance of power• Values of subordinate group are subdued.• Oppressed group feels inferior when forced to reject values to maintain status quo.• Bullying behavior is directed horizontally as an adaptive behavior to feeling oppressed. |
| Work Group Manipulation Theory | Hutchinson (2012) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes bullies as informal leaders/powerbrokers in work group• Outlines four forms of bullying: influencing, persuading, rationalizing, and complying |

2.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Workplace bullying is a phenomenon that occurs across several industries. The Workplace Bullying Institute's 2013 Industry survey identified healthcare and education as the prime industries most prone to workplace bullying (Namie, 2013). The research surrounding this phenomenon suggests that these two industries are most prone to workplace bullying behavior because these fields attract employees who have the desire and motivation to help people. Namie (2013) explains that employees entering these fields exhibit the desire to heal, help, teach, nurture impressionable minds, and see the good in others. Thus, turning their backs on politics and staying focused on their work leaves them vulnerable to workplace bullying attacks. Recent research conducted specific to nursing describes the phenomenon of horizontal bullying, which is defined as hostile, aggressive, and harmful behavior between co-workers who are positioned on the same level of the organization's hierarchical ladder via attitudes, actions, words and/or behaviors (Hutchinson et al., 2006; Thobaben, 2007).

Horizontal workplace bullying behaviors differ from behaviors associated with childhood bullying. Horizontal workplace bullying behaviors are indirect, subtle, and covert forms of aggression. The most commonly reported forms of horizontal workplace bullying include isolation, exclusion, belittlement, humiliation, verbal threats, and spreading rumors (Hutchinson et al. 2009; Rayner, 1997; Smith, 1997). These behaviors have a lasting impact on victims and the organization. Bullying in the workplace affects the culture of an organization which leads to low morale, decreased job satisfaction, and poor performance (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Victims report psychological, physical, social, and economic distress during incidents of horizontal workplace bullying, and coping strategies differ among the victims. Common coping strategies include doing nothing, discussing problems with peers, co-workers or supervisors,

seeking revenge, taking direct action, consuming alcohol/substance abuse, and leaving the organization (Baillien et al., 2009; Blasé et al., 2008; Aquino & Thau, 2009).

Most of the understandings of workplace bullying are drawn from theories in organizational psychology that describe bullying as a form of interpersonal conflict (Johnson et al., 2015). However, Organizational Theory (Hoel & Salin, 2003), Oppressed Group Theory (Roberts, 1983), and Workplace Manipulation Theory (Hutchinson, 2012) have also played a vital role in examining workplace bullying through alternative lenses.

Much research has been conducted to explore the phenomenon of workplace bullying; however, most of this research has been quantitative in nature, focusing on incidents of workplace bullying, workplace bullying behaviors, and the effect that workplace bullying has on victims. Recently, much of the research has focused on the healthcare industry, specifically the nursing sector. Education has been identified as a prime industry for workplace bullying (Namie, 2013), yet the research in this field pales in comparison to nursing. Further qualitative research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of horizontal workplace bullying in the educational industry.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research methodology that will be used to complete this qualitative study of teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting. Horizontal workplace bullying is defined as hostile, aggressive, and harmful behavior between co-workers who are positioned on the same level of the organization's hierarchical ladder (e.g., teacher-to-teacher), via attitudes, actions, words, and/or behaviors (Hutchinson et al., 2006; Thobaben, 2007). Chapter 3 provides a description of the theoretical framework, the problem explored in this inquiry, and the research questions used to investigate this problem. Chapter 3 also outlines the interview protocol, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Current research on horizontal bullying in the workplace creates the foundation for the theoretical framework for this study. A plethora of research exists on this topic; however, little research has explored horizontal bullying interactions between teachers in the K-12 setting, specifically relating to the teacher's perceptions of this phenomenon. This qualitative study includes interviews of teachers who self-identify as victims and/or witnesses of horizontal workplace bullying. The interviews were used to gather information on the teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of this behavior.

3.1 INQUIRY STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORK

For the past two decades, there has been substantial academic and professional research on workplace bullying. Although much is known about workplace bullying, previous studies have traditionally been conducted using quantitative methods (Fahie & Devine, 2012). Due to its sensitive nature, researchers suggest the use of qualitative research methods to gain insight into educational and social issues by understanding the experience of behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of the individuals whose lives reflect these issues (Seidman, 2006). Using qualitative measures illustrates complex textual descriptions about how participants perceive the manifestation of workplace bullying.

Recently, much of the current research about workplace bullying has come out of the healthcare sector, specifically in the field of nursing. This research explores deriving meaning and a better understanding of horizontal workplace bullying through the nurses' perspectives. Research by Johnson (2009) reviewed international perspectives on workplace bullying and found that bullying is more complex than a simple conflict between individuals. Johnson's review concluded that workplace bullying should be examined through social, individual, and organizational lenses.

A study by Hutchinson et al. (2010) examined horizontal bullying experienced by nurses through a "circuits of power" framework (p.25). Their findings correlate with Johnson (2009) by suggesting that there is much more to the dynamics of workplace bullying in an organization than the commonly accepted assumptions of past research. Past research has framed workplace bullying as a form of interpersonal conflict or as a response to organizational change. Hutchinson et al. (2010) offer that in organizations where rule-following exists, power struggles occur in an attempt to control actions and fix rules that are not in line with the dominant

employee's norms. This research helped frame this study, by exploring more than interpersonal conflict as a source of horizontal workplace bullying manifestation.

To date, there have been a small number of qualitative studies specifically aimed at exploring teachers' experiences with horizontal workplace bullying; in fact, I could only find one study, and it was not specific to horizontal bullying. Due to the lack of research in this area, I referenced a study by Hutchinson et al. (2009) that developed a typology of bullying behaviors by interviewing nurses about their experiences with workplace bullying. Their findings developed three categories of horizontal workplace bullying behavior: 1) personal attack, 2) erosion of professional competence and reputation, and 3) attack through work roles and tasks (Hutchinson et al., 2009). These findings suggest that workplace bullying behaviors are often focused on damaging the reputation of the victims and are often masked in work tasks or work processes. This research influenced the development and framework of this study by targeting a specific employment sector and identifying specific behaviors that target this sector using qualitative methods and analysis.

Research consistently cites education as a high-risk profession for workplace bullying; as mentioned previously, there has been little research on the impact of workplace bullying for teachers involved in this phenomenon. In a workplace bullying study specific to teachers, Fahie and Devine (2012) attempted to fill this void by analyzing 24, in-depth interviews of self-identified victims of workplace bullying in primary schools. Their findings suggest that there are profound physical, psychological, social, and economic effects associated with workplace bullying behavior (as seen in Figure 1). These effects mirror the effects of workplace bullying outlined in Johnson's (2009) review, mentioned above. This research has influenced the

development of this study by providing a resource for potential themes to look for while analyzing data about how teachers react to and cope with horizontal bullying.

As the workplace bullying research suggests, workplace bullying exists and it has profound physical, psychological, social, and economic effects on the victims. DeMore Palmer's (2011) phenomenological study about informal teacher leadership and teachers who choose to take on informal leadership roles found that horizontal workplace bullying has a significant effect on teacher leadership. In this study, informal teacher leaders identified "resistant colleagues" as the largest obstacle to overcome when choosing to take on an informal leadership role (DeMore Palmer, 2011). The informal teacher leaders reported being the target of horizontal bullying, which was described as devaluing the leadership opportunities. Participants in DeMore Palmer's study referenced being questioned about voluntarily exceeding contractual obligations and accused of making other colleagues "look bad." These findings shaped my framework by questioning how horizontal workplace bullying affects the professional growth of teachers.

The ESRI (O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007) reported that education, health, and social work are the two public sectors at greatest risk for bullying in the workplace, yet not much research has been conducted in the educational sector, more specifically in the K-12 setting. For this reason, the methodologies and frameworks that influenced this work were derived from the research exploring horizontal workplace bullying with nurses, and other educational research not specific to horizontal bullying. I will use this research to explore the subject of horizontal workplace bullying as it manifests in the education sector.

The purpose of this inquiry is to develop an in-depth, qualitative understanding of the experiences that K-12 teachers have with the horizontal workplace bullying by (a) deconstructing

the perception of why this phenomenon occurs among teachers; (b) understanding how teachers behave when confronted by a bully; (c) understanding how teachers cope with these acts; and (d) exploring the effects of horizontal workplace bullying on teachers' professional growth (Fahie & Devine, 2012) using a qualitative approach as suggested by Parzefall and Salin (2010).

I will use a constructivist framework and qualitative interview methodologies to structure this study of teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying, which is defined in this study as hostile, aggressive, and harmful behavior between co-workers who are positioned on the same level of the organization's hierarchical ladder, via attitudes, actions, words, and/or behaviors (Hutchinson et al., 2006; Thobaben, 2007). This study aims to construct new ideas about horizontal workplace bullying in education by exploring the way teachers in a K-12 setting interpret their experiences and surroundings when experiencing this phenomenon. By studying horizontal bullying in the K-12 setting, I can develop an in-depth, qualitative understanding of this phenomenon that can lead to more targeted interventions for teachers, teacher unions, and school districts to eliminate workplace bullying from the organization. The findings of this study may also serve as a driving factor for policy development for school districts and may also have broader implications for organizational culture, teachers, and students.

After reviewing studies and theories on workplace bullying, the conceptual frameworks influenced interview questions that were designed to describe the teachers' perceptions of horizontal workplace bullying. This conceptual framework also led to the development of codes and patterns for analyzing the qualitative data.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Four research questions guided this study:

Question 1: What are the teachers' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying?

Question 2: How do teachers react when confronted by a teacher bully?

Question 3: How do teachers cope with horizontal workplace bullying?

Question 4: What, if any, are the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on the teacher's professional growth?

3.3 RESEARCH PROTOCOL

The basis of each research question was the search for a teacher's perception of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting. By interviewing teachers about their perceptions, I attempted to find common themes and patterns in the descriptions of the behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of the teachers affected by horizontal workplace bullying. This section further identifies the setting, participants, general research protocol, and the interview questions.

3.3.1 Participants

Six teachers participated in this study. Five of these participants were self-identified victims of horizontal workplace bullying. One participant was a self-identified witness of horizontal

workplace bullying. The teachers' years of experience varied from 3.5 years to 26 years of service. Four out of the six participants held other positions beyond their teaching positions in the district. For example, Judy was a classroom teacher, but she also was a member of the math, transition, and social studies committees. Table 4 describes the participants.

Table 4. *Participants*

| Participant (pseudonym) | Identification | Years of Experience | Point in Career when Bullying Began | Role in the School | Bullying Occurring in Present Position |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|--|---|
| Sadie | Victim | 3.5 | Year 1 | Elementary Teacher Technology Committee | Yes |
| Katherine | Victim | 10 | Year 1 | Elementary Teacher Technology Committee AV Coordinator | Yes |
| Tony | Victim | 9 | Year 2 | Middle School Teacher | No |
| Jane | Witness | 14 | Year 9 | Elementary Teacher | No |
| Judy | Victim | 11 | Year 8 | Elementary Teacher Math Committee Transition Committee Social Studies Committee | Yes |
| Dominic | Victim | 26 | Year 1 | Music Teacher Department Chair | Yes |

3.3.2 Recruitment

Participants were recruited using word-of mouth solicitation and snowball sampling. Principals were asked to share information about the study with their staff. Interested participants were required to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Hold a current teaching position in the K-12 public school setting
- Identify as a victim or witness of horizontal workplace bullying

Participants who met the eligibility criteria were asked to contact the primary researcher directly via email. Once communication was established, interested participants received an informed consent letter. Upon completion of the informed consent, interviews were scheduled.

Snowball sampling was used on participants who volunteered via word-of-mouth solicitation. After the interview, participants were provided with letter and a flyer (found in Appendix A) to share with a colleague who may also be interested in participating in this study.

3.3.3 Interview protocol

Four overarching research questions provided a framework for this study (presented in Section 3.2). To address these questions, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used for data collection. The interviews included exploratory and open-ended questions, which originated from the literature review and the research questions. Two versions of the interview questions were created, one to be used with victims (found in Appendix C) and the other to be used with witnesses (found in Appendix D). Six, face-to-face interviews were conducted in a conversational manner using the interview questions as a guide. The interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes in length. All interviews were audio recorded for transcribing purposes. Interview

locations were determined by participant preference and varied from coffee shops to personal residences. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym and an identification number to protect their confidentiality. The interviews began with four demographic questions:

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. How long have you been in your present position?
3. How long had you been in your position when the bullying incident occurred?
4. Briefly describe your role in the school.

Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, these questions served as an icebreaker to quickly develop a supportive and comfortable rapport with the participants. Data gathered from these questions was also helpful in exploring correlations between seniority, time in position, and role in the school with occurrences of horizontal workplace bullying.

The interviews continued with a brief statistical overview of the history of workplace bullying and the definition of horizontal workplace bullying to standardize the participants' understanding of the topic.

The interview questions were arranged into four categories, developed from the research questions. Sub questions were created to gather more specific data relating to each of the research questions. Table 5 outlines the interview questions.

Table 5. *Interview Questions*

| Research Question | Interview Questions |
|---|---|
| What are the victims' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe an interaction that you have had with another teacher that you believe was an example of horizontal workplace bullying. • What bullying behaviors did you experience? • How would you describe this teacher's teaching experience compared to yours (e.g. more, less, or equal experience)? • Explain how this interaction began. • Why do you believe that you were the target of this behavior? • Describe periods of time when the bullying behavior was more intense. • Describe times when the bullying behavior subsided. • What you believe to be the reason for this? |
| How do teacher victims react when confronted by a teacher bully? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the reaction you had when this teacher confronted you. • Explain any other reactions that occurred throughout the course of these incidents. • Were these reactions commensurate with how you preferred to react? If not, describe your ideal reaction? What prevented this reaction from occurring? • Would you react the same way if confronted again by this individual? Why? • What were the reactions of your colleagues during these interactions? |

Table 5 (continued)

| | |
|---|---|
| How do teacher victims cope with horizontal workplace bullying? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the feelings that you had throughout this situation. • How did you find relief from these emotions? • Describe the steps you took to intervene in this situation. • Describe the steps that you took to prevent future occurrences from happening. • How has horizontal workplace bullying affected you personally? |
| What, if any, are the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on professional growth? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have these interactions affected you professionally? • Explain any professional opportunities that you chose not to participate in because of the horizontal workplace bullying. |
| Additional Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you decide to participate in this study? |

During the interview, participants were asked follow-up questions for clarification and extension purposes. Handwritten field notes also served as a form of further data collection.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis began by uploading the interview audio files to a secure cloud based storage application. The audio files were professionally transcribed for clarity, omitting stutters, false starts, and repetitions. The transcriptions were uploaded to a web based qualitative data analysis software program.

The initial codebook was uploaded to the software program. This codebook was derived from the concepts cited in the literature (Refer to Section 2.0 – Review of Literature). This codebook was constructed from the literature in the following five areas: behaviors, effects, coping, reactions, perceptions. These areas became the parent codes. Child codes were also derived from the research to retrieve more specific data. Table 6 outlines the parent and child codes used in this codebook.

Table 6. *Parent and Child Codes*

| Parent Code | Child Codes |
|-------------|--|
| Behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation and Exclusion • Intimidation and Threats • Belittlement and Humiliation • Damaging Professional Identity • Limiting Professional Growth • Making Work Difficult • Economic Sanctions |
| Effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Psychological • Social • Economic • Organizational |
| Coping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-Focused • Emotion-Focused |
| Reaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit • Voice • Loyalty • Neglect |
| Perceptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs as to why this behavior is occurring |

3.4.1 Verification of codebook

To verify the appropriateness of these codes, I reviewed the initial codebook with my faculty committee and a qualitative researcher who has studied in this area. My research assistant and I

reviewed each code and its definition. Through discussion, we resolved any differences in understandings of code definitions.

3.4.2 Coding procedures

I coded each interview in its entirety using the parent and child codes described above. For example, I first coded the interview transcripts for behaviors. Then, I identified the child codes that were relevant such as intimidation, isolation, belittlement, etc. As I coded, I kept research memos about interesting phrases, expressions, and quotes. I also noted quotes that presented surprising findings.

Inter-coder agreement was used to ensure reliability. Independently, my research assistant chose ten-percent of the interview transcript pages to code, while I coded in entirety (Lacy & Rife, 1996). For example, we had 110 pages of interview transcripts; therefore, my research assistant coded eleven pages of transcripts. The pages were chosen randomly and included samples from the beginning, middle, and end of unmarked interview transcriptions. After we independently coded the transcript pages, we met to discuss our codes. For the codes where we disagreed, we discussed the definition and came to a consensus and agreement.

Coding continued by computing the coding for all the interview transcripts. Expanding the coding process resulted in several emerging themes, in part because of the thematic nature of the interview questions themselves. For example, the theme ‘behaviors’ arose frequently because this was imbedded in one or more of the interview questions. Thorough coding elicited additional themes which are included in the discussion that follows.

4.0 FINDINGS

The primary aim of this research study was to explore teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying by learning about the victims' perceptions, reactions, coping strategies, and the implications on the victims' professional growth. To provide an overview of the data, this chapter begins with a description of the most frequently coded interview responses.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Chapter 4 reports on the phenomenon of horizontal workplace bullying as perceived by the participants in this study. To provide the reader with a comprehensive representation of the findings, this section discusses the most frequent responses by research question. The interpretation of these data will be included in Section 5 – Discussion.

4.1.1 Demographic data

Demographic data were collected for two reasons. The demographic data questions were used to ease the participants into discussing this sensitive topic. The demographic data were also collected to explore possible links between work experience, leadership experience, and time in current position in relation to horizontal workplace bullying. This data found that four out of the

six (66%) participants held informal leadership positions within their school or district. Associations between work experience and number of years in position were not present in this study.

4.1.2 What are the teachers' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying?

The teachers' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying emerged during a discussion of their experiences. The discussion included the type of behaviors the teachers were experiencing, words used to describe the bully, and explanations about why the teachers believed that they were the target of horizontal workplace bullying behavior.

4.1.2.1 Behaviors

Of the six participants, all of them (100%) described experiencing a behavior that was categorized as belittlement and humiliation. The references to this type of behavior occurred 42 times across the six participants. One participant, Judy explained:

“At my new school, the tradition was to have a Christmas party at one of the teacher's houses every year. And basically what occurs is everyone is invited to the party, but people know who's really invited and who really shouldn't be showing up to this party. And every year they have some sort of skit or play or little musical, song and dance. Where they make fun of other adults in the building. It sounds so silly to say make fun of because we are like grown women, but that's what they do. They created a CD soundtrack. And they created songs about staff members that they did not care about. And they put their pictures on the front of this CD cover. One of the songs was about one

of our teachers, who has some confirmed mental problems. And they did a song about her, it was like a Whitney Houston song and they all performed the songs in straight jackets. Then I found out that I had made the list. They were just laughing about the fact that I'm single and that I date a lot. And they sang a song about my little black book and how full my little black book must be. But yet I still can't like find someone to marry. I was so embarrassed.”

Another participant, Dominic, described, “It’s always a personal attack. It’s a ‘you’re not very good,’ or ‘oh my god, you have the worst performance,’ or ‘you guys aren’t very good teachers.’ This person always throws in little jabs. It’s just a slap in the face to embarrass, to humiliate me in front of my colleagues. It’s constant put down, put down, put down. The point was this person was deliberately trying to humiliate me and it worked.”

Of the six participants, five (83%) of them described experiencing a behavior that was categorized as isolation and exclusion. The references to this type of behavior occurred 26 times across the five participants. Jane described:

“I was like shocked, taken aback. Because we, me and another teacher, were at one time close with this person. We were invited to her wedding. We would go out for happy hours. And then all of the sudden she just like stopped talking to us, stopped...it was very strange. Just went out of her way to be nasty to us. I still tried to say hello to her, but again, you would get the cold shoulder. She would not speak to me. She would not speak to the other teacher. She would exclude other people including her teammate. She didn’t share anything with her. She didn’t include her in anything. She didn’t speak to me for about a month, then I noticed that she unfriended me on Facebook.”

Another participant, Katherine explained, “They don’t like it when they say ‘this is what we do.’ And you say, ‘I like that idea, that’s cool. But I’m going to do it like this.’ Then it’s offensive that you’re not doing it exactly the same way. It’s like you have to do it their way or the repercussions could be that you just get the cold shoulder for a couple of days, you get left out for a couple of days.”

Five out of the six (83%) participants also described experiencing a behavior that was categorized as damaging professional identity. The references to this type of behavior occurred 14 times across the five participants. Tony explained,

“When we would have our team meetings they would question why we were doing certain things. They weren’t flat out saying ‘you’re wrong’ but they would always say, ‘well why are you doing this, why are you doing that, why are you making these videos? Why are you making these blogs? Now we all have to make blogs you know. Why are you doing these kind of things?’ One of the teachers said that it was making them look bad.”

The two other codes that were shared across participants were making work difficult and intimidation and threats. Four out of the six (66%) participants described experiencing these behaviors. The references to making work difficult appeared 12 times across the four participants. Intimidations and threats appeared seven times across the four participants. Tony described,

“It got to the point where one of the other teachers started to sit in on my classroom on her prep period. And I would ask her, ‘Oh, what’re you doing here?’ She was like, ‘Oh, just, just wanna watch. Just wanna hear what all the hype’s about.’ And she would sit there. And she would do the same thing to the other teacher and then she would report

back to the other teachers as to like, ‘Well they're doing this this way and they're not following the same thing,’ and she wanted a more unified approach towards how we were doing novels, how we were doing math, how we were doing all of these different things. Which to a degree I understand. But it led to other teachers observing -- unannounced. And it made things awkward. I was confident in what I was doing, but you start to second-guess, should I be doing this stuff? Am I ruffling feathers?”

The types of behavior that the participants describe throughout their horizontal bullying experience varied across participants and experiences. Table 7 illustrates the most frequently described behaviors.

Table 7. *Behaviors: Five Most Frequently Described Horizontal Bullying Behaviors Expressed by the Participants*

| Behavior | Number of Participants Describing this Behavior | Number of Occurrences |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Belittlement and Humiliation | 6 | 42 |
| Isolation and Exclusion | 5 | 26 |
| Damaging Professional Identity | 5 | 14 |
| Making Work Difficult | 4 | 12 |
| Intimidation and Threats | 4 | 7 |

4.1.2.2 Describing the bully

Without explicitly asking to explain the characteristics of the bully, descriptions emerged as the teachers discussed their experience. All six (100%) of the participants included at least one description of the bully during their interview. Their descriptions of their bullies are below:

- “The devil works down the hall from me.”
- “A terrorist and a raging asshole.”
- “A passive aggressive backstabber and bus thrower.”
- “A sit-at-the-desk kind of teacher.”
- “Our union rep, she lived by the contract.”
- “Just mean. Just one of those mean girls. She was just nasty.”

4.1.2.3 Why were the participants the targets of horizontal bullying?

Throughout the interviews, the participants were asked to explain their perceptions surrounding why they were the targets of the horizontal workplace bullying behavior. These explanations also included what the participants believed to be the catalyst for this behavior. References to these perceptions occurred 69 times across the six participants. During the coding process, eight themes emerged. The top two perceptions described by the participants were professional jealousy (n=6) and voluntarily exceeding contractual obligations (n=5). Having a disagreement (n=3) was also a frequently perceived catalyst as were embracing change (n=3) and being new to the building/department/grade level (n=3). Guilty by association (n=1), not being part of the group (n=1), and getting the job over someone else (n=1) were other perceived catalysts for horizontal workplace bullying. Table 8 lists these eight perceptions, the number of participants who described these perceptions, and examples from their interviews.

Table 8. *Perceptions: Participants' Beliefs as to Why the Horizontal Bullying Occurred*

| Perception | Number of Participants Describing this Perception | Example(s) from the Participant(s) |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Professional Jealousy | 6 | <p>"I think jealousy, truthfully. You know, they were better teachers and this person knew it. And maybe they felt insecure and felt threatened by the fact that they were better teachers." (Jane)</p> <p>"I started using Seesaw, which is an online portfolio tool this year. It really connects the parents. They can get a picture throughout the day, a video throughout the day of whatever their students are doing. I found it in the beginning of the year, I told her about it. She wasn't interested. But then everyone [students and parents] were excited about it and liked. And then 'You're making me look bad. So you should stop doing that.'" (Katherine)</p> <p>"We were more innovative with the technology than they were. We were the first group to start a blog where we would blog every single day. We would do videos, we would put up pictures, we would Skype with people, we were kind of on the front end of that stuff. So they looked at it almost as like we were challenging or creating more work for them. We were approached by two teachers saying that we needed to be more uniform with the other sixth grade teams because parents were complaining that certain kids were experiencing certain things that other kids weren't and it was making certain teachers look bad." (Tony)</p> |

Table 8 (continued)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Voluntarily Exceeding Contractual Obligations | 5 | <p>“I'm available pretty much all of the time. Maybe that's a good thing, maybe that's a bad thing. But if I can quickly respond back to an email, a text, whatever it is, it has significantly taken back from issues that I've had. Angry parents, everything. But she feels that that shouldn't be happening. 'That's too much, 3:45 is the cut off.'” (Katherine)</p> <p>“She was a union rep. Lived by the contract. She was also a minimalist. Whereas, me and my co-worker were energetic and innovative. I think that was part of it.” (Tony)</p> <p>“She's our union rep and is very vocal about everything -- she's finally given up on the whole idea that I work past the end of my work day. But she was always very vocal about how inappropriate that is and how I shouldn't do that and how I shouldn't go above and beyond. So that's one reason.” (Sadie)</p> |
| Having a Disagreement | 3 | <p>“At one point, we had a disagreement. This person was the choir director for a year and wanted to be able to take kids out of band two days a week to sing in the choir and I said, 'You know, it's my first year I don't know if I'm gonna do that.' And they were enraged. Enraged. That was probably the first battle we had. I think that was the first time that this person got really got mad. And I'm pretty sure that's when everything really started with the constant bullying.” (Dominic)</p> <p>“It's very common if someone disagrees with you, they'll let you know in not the most professional way. Almost in like an embarrassing manner. They'll kind of undermine your talking or your thinking.” (Judy)</p> |

Table 8 (continued)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Embracing Change | 3 | <p>“I see it being more of they're afraid of change. And I think they find it to be threatening. So their way of dealing with that is to shoot it down. I use a lot of technology so that probably scares them.” (Katherine)</p> <p>“It's just tough because so much of it is getting shut down because it's just—‘well this is the way we've always done it’ and there's like no room for change.” (Sadie)</p> <p>“I was hired for my technology background. My principal really wanted me to push the envelope on a lot of stuff. I think it's partially because I'm trying new things.” (Sadie)</p> |
| Being New to the Building/Department/Grade Level | 3 | <p>“I think the interactions began just because this became my new school.” (Judy)</p> <p>“It was the four of them [teachers] for a really, really long time. And then the year that myself and another teacher were hired and it became six and then [my colleague] finally had allies.” (Sadie)</p> |
| Guilty by Association | 1 | <p>“I think I was guilty by association because I was friends with the teacher she ignored.” (Jane)</p> <p>“If I was seen in the hallway speaking to a fifth-grade teacher, well then the third-grade teachers are now mad at me.” (Judy)</p> |
| Not Becoming Part of a Group | 1 | <p>“I think it was because I didn't immediately become a part of their groups and go to all of their gatherings together. It's so silly -- if you walk down the hallway and you pass them and say hi, and they don't talk to you, just take two steps and turn around and they're giving you the finger.” (Judy)</p> |
| Getting the Job Over Someone Else | 1 | <p>“I got the job, the bus driver's son didn't, so he wouldn't bring the buses. He fooled with me. His best friend who taught elementary band wouldn't give me instruments to use. It was just constant. The coach, also his friend and another teacher, would throw the drums in the garbage at the stadium if my practice went two minutes over.” (Dominic)</p> |

4.1.3 How do teachers react when confronted by a teacher bully?

Each participant was asked to recall the reaction they had when they were confronted by the bully. The reactions were coded into four categories: exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (Baillien et al., 2009; Withey & Cooper, 1989).

All six (100%) participants described reactions that were categorized as neglect. *Neglect* is explained as frustrated and dissatisfied employees focusing their attention on non-work-related interests and passively allowing the conditions in the organization to deteriorate (Baillien et al., 2009). The references to this reaction occurred 19 times across all six participants. Judy explained, “I don't confront anybody. I just kind of keep to myself. And I feel like at this point since I've been there a couple years, they just know they're not gonna get a reaction from me. So I sort of try not to -- I disengage.” Tony described:

“I mean, I just kind of go about my own business. I get discouraged sometimes from the standpoint of you learn all these neat things and you wanna use them but at the same times sometimes you're afraid to use them because you don't want to be looked at as doing something different or kissing up or being viewed at as doing something just to please the principal or something like that. But like I said, I tried to kill 'em with kindness sometimes. And ignorance. And go about my own business.”

All six (100%) participants described reactions that were categorized as loyal. *Loyalty* is described as passively, but optimistically, waiting for conditions within the organizations to improve, showing good organizational citizenship (Baillien et al., 2009). The references to this reaction occurred 15 times across all six participants. Katherine, in response to how she reacts to being bullied: “I would say I do nothing as in, I don't just sit there and do nothing, but I'll

continue to do whatever I am doing, and I'll continue to say 'I'm always willing to help you.'" Sadie described, "I generally try to be a very respectful person when I'm talking to people. Even though her questions are ridiculous, I try to answer them the best that I can and not be disrespectful back."

The two other reactions that were shared across the participants were voice and exit. *Voice* describes the act of actively and constructively attempting to improve frustration at work by discussing problems with a supervisor or co-worker (Baillien et al., 2009). Tony recalled, "My principal was very nice. He was very supportive. He would continue to encourage you to the point where he'd be like, 'Listen, I know what you're dealing with. Just keep doing what you do. If there's any major problems, I'll deal with it on our end. Just go about it.'" Judy explained, "I tried to solve amongst us. When that didn't work, I made my principal aware of the situation. I didn't want them to be like this in front of our principal. We had to have a sit down with our principal which was incredibly embarrassing for me because in all of my years prior to that, I had never had to do this." Dominic discussed a time when he confronted the bully, "I got right in this person's face. I said, 'don't you ever say something like that. You're despicable, you're disgusting, you're unprofessional. We have to work together, you better get this out of your system. I will not tolerate this anymore.' But nothing changed."

Exit describes the act of actively and destructively dealing with frustration at work by leaving the organization or scapegoating (Baillien et al., 2009). Dominic recalled:

"There is this layer of, oh my god. Now I can't move, obviously, I'm not going to go to another district. But it's crossed my mind many, many times. And we're the same exact age. I will have to put up with this person for the rest of my career. Now if there is an

opening in another department in the district I will consider it. I will consider getting away from them because I just can't stand it anymore.”

Judy explained, “I have to work here right now. There’s nowhere else I can work.” Tony described an experience about his teaching partner, “It weighed on her a lot. To the point where she moved buildings, once I left.”

Table 9 illustrates the most frequently described reactions.

Table 9. *Reactions: Descriptions and Occurrence of Participants’ Reactions*

| Reaction | Number of Participants Describing this Behavior | Number of Occurrences |
|----------|---|-----------------------|
| Neglect | 6 | 19 |
| Loyalty | 6 | 15 |
| Voice | 4 | 11 |
| Exit | 3 | 3 |

4.1.3.1 Emotion

Emotion began to emerge as a theme as the participants described their reactions to horizontal workplace bullying. References to emotions occurred 36 times across all six participants. The emotions were classified into six categories using Ekman’s (1999) *Basic Emotions Framework*: anger, disgust, fear, sadness, surprise, and happiness. However, happiness was not included in the classification because none of the participants described happiness as a reaction to horizontal workplace bullying. The emotions referenced most often were anger (n=10), surprise (n=9), and sadness (n=7), followed by disgust (n=5) and fear (n=5). Table 10 depicts the emotional

descriptions used by the participants to describe their reactions and the number of times these emotions were referenced throughout the interviews.

Table 10. *Emotion: Emotions Described by Participants*

| Emotion | Number of References Throughout Interviews | Participants' Descriptions of Emotion |
|----------------|---|--|
| Anger | 10 | "Frustrated" |
| | | "Mad" |
| | | "Pissed off" |
| | | "Enraged" |
| | | "Annoyed" |
| | | "Hands being tied" |
| Surprise | 9 | "Loathe" |
| | | "Stunned" |
| | | "Shocked" |
| | | "Surprised" |
| Sadness | 7 | "Unbelievable" |
| | | "Sad" |
| | | "Upset" |
| Disgust | 5 | "Disappointment" |
| | | "Discouraged" |
| | | "Mortified" |
| | | "Ridiculousness" |
| Fear | 5 | "Sickening" |
| | | "Confused" |
| | | "Uncomfortable" |
| | | "Embarrassed" |
| | | "Dread" |

4.2 HOW DO TEACHERS COPE WITH HORIZONTAL WORKPLACE BULLYING?

Descriptions about how the participants coped with horizontal workplace bullying were coded into two categories: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Five out of the six (83%) participants described using both of the strategies to cope with their horizontal workplace bullying experience. Aquino and Thau (2009) describe problem-focused coping strategies as taking direct action, seeking revenge, or seeking support from others. All six (100%) of the participants reported using problem-focused coping strategies. The references to problem-focused coping occurred 15 times across the six participants.

Tony described his coping, "I just kind of went about my own business, but there were definitely times where I called my dad, who was a teacher, just to say, 'Hey, you know, this is what's happening.' He was like, 'oh, get used to it, 'cause you know it happens everywhere.'" Dominic explained, "Typically I will call another colleague who also gets from this person a lot too." Judy reflected, "I would call one of my best friends, who is not in my building and who is not privy to all of this, but I had to stop myself from calling her because I felt like I was just calling her and being like, 'Hi how are you?' and then pouring negative nonsense all into her life." Jane explained, "Talking, talking, talking with other people. Childishly, about her. It was a way to vent, so just talking about her." Katherine suggested, "Surrounding yourself with people that see things the same way you do." Sadie explained, "Typically I turn around and go bitch to someone to unload."

Five out of the six (83%) participants reported using emotion-focused coping strategies. Emotion-focused coping strategies include using humor, alcohol consumption/substance abuse, forgiveness, and doing nothing (Aquino & Thau, 2009). The references to emotion-focused

coping occurred 13 times across five of the participants. Judy reflected, “I just don’t communicate with them. I just do my own thing and have some wine when I come home.” Katherine explained, “We go out to happy hour a lot.” Sadie described, “After two and a half years of working with these people, I’m just kind of like, whatever. Oh, and alcohol consumption, booze, lots of booze.” Dominic stated, “I stay away from them and I work out.”

4.2.1 What, if any, are the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on the teachers’ professional growth?

The participants were asked to describe the implications that horizontal workplace bullying has had on their professional growth. Professional implications were referenced 12 times across six participants. All six of the participants (100%) explained that horizontal workplace bullying is not currently affecting their professional growth. Judy mentioned,

“It’s made me self-conscious professionally because I don’t want to be associated with [the bullies]. I feel as though we all work hard to maintain our reputation and especially in a school system with families. Everybody knows everybody when you’re teaching in a small town. But I don’t think I’ve passed up any professional opportunities because of it. I mean, I’m still on all of those committees and I just had a student teacher, so I don’t think so.”

Sadie explained, “At first it made me second guess things I was doing, just because knowing what the reactions were and thinking, was it worth the reaction? I definitely tried to avoid certain things. But this doesn’t affect me professionally any more. I have thick skin about it now.”

4.2.1.1 Personal implications of horizontal workplace bullying

Personal implications began to emerge as a theme as the participants described the effect that horizontal workplace bullying had on them. Personal effects were organized into three categories: psychological, social, and physical.

All six (100%) of the participants reported experiencing psychological effects throughout their bullying episodes. The references to psychological effects occurred 43 times across the six participants. Judy explained being self-conscious, worrying, and feeling paranoid: “I didn't want to go to work; I'd pull in that parking spot and not want to get out of my car. I'd think like, oh my goodness, what do they say about me every day? When I'd get out of my car I'd check my teeth for lipstick and I make sure I was OK and then think, what could they say about me today?” Dominic described his loss of sense of self: “It causes me to not be the person I want to be.” Sadie recalls a time when she felt upset: “There have been instances where it's pushed me to tears. I can't believe I was just spoken to like that.” Jane recounts a time when she felt angry: “Well, I'm a very personable person and I get along with everybody. So, it was sort of a – it bothered in the sense that somebody was upset with me for a reason that I couldn't quite figure out.”

Three out of the six (50%) participants reported experiencing social effects throughout their bullying episodes. The references to social effects occurred nine times across the three participants. Dominic explained, “It just causes me to pull back from more social interactions. It causes me to not go out to lunch with the group 'cause I don't wanna be in that same place with them. I just can't anymore. I did for a long time. I'd rather be alone.” Judy described, “There's a lot of personal events that I don't go to, you know, like school happy hours. And I know if they're gonna be there, I will choose not to go.” Sadie recalled a time when, “[the bully]

suggested that we have a barbeque and we could come with our significant others. And I was like, that is the exact opposite thing that I want right now. I do not need to spend any time with these people.”

Physical effects were reported by two of the six (33%) participants. These effects were described by Sadie and Katherine. Sadie explained, “It causes sleepless nights.” Katherine recalled, “Sometimes it’s hard because it makes you exhausted, all day, every day to fight this battle.”

4.2.1.2 Organizational effects

One out of the six (16%) participants described an organizational effect of horizontal workplace bullying. Tony explained, “She’s still in that building and there’s still a lot of turnover from people that are on that sixth grade team. Teachers saying things like, ‘I don’t want to work across the same hall from her anymore.’ And ‘Can I work downstairs in fifth grade?’ Things like that.” It is important to note that two other participants voiced the desire to leave the department or grade level if the opportunity presented itself.

5.0 DISCUSSION

According the 2014 Workplace Bullying Institute's *U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey*, 27% of American employees experience bullying behavior at work, 21% have been a witness, and 72% are aware that it is happening in their workplace (Namie, 2014). ESRI (O'Connell, Calvert, & Watson, 2007) and NEA (2012) report that most workplace bullying incidents occur between colleagues. Horizontal workplace bullying is defined as hostile, aggressive, and harmful behavior between co-workers who are positioned on the same level of the organization's hierarchical ladder (e.g., teacher-to-teacher) (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2006; Thobaben, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions about the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting. This chapter discusses an interpretation of the findings, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research. It begins with the interpretation of the findings from this study, which will provide a more specific description about the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying through the perspective of the teachers who have direct experience with this phenomenon.

5.1 HOW DOES HORIZONTAL WORKPLACE BULLYING MANIFEST IN THE K-12 SETTING?

The teachers' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal bullying in the K-12 setting include the type of behaviors the teachers experienced, phrases used to describe the bully, and explanations about why the teachers believed they were the targets of horizontal workplace bullying behavior.

5.1.1 Behaviors – “He would throw my drums in the garbage”

As described by the participants, bullying behaviors associated with workplace bullying are indirect and subtle forms of aggression such as isolation, exclusion, belittlement, and humiliation, (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2009; Rayner, 1997; Smith, 1997). Teachers who participated in this study were most likely to experience behavior categorized as belittlement and humiliation, and isolation and exclusion. This aggression was displayed through verbal and non-verbal actions and was elusive and stealthy (e.g., gossiping, undermining, excessive questioning, intrusion, pestering, ignoring, silent treatment, excessive scrutiny). Language was an important vehicle for belittling and humiliating the targets, as also reported by Hutchinson et al. (2010). Participants in this study reported personal attacks, constant put-downs, talking about others, and undermining thoughts as verbal assaults that were used to embarrass or stun.

Behaviors associated with isolation and exclusion presented as giving the cold shoulder, not speaking to others, not sharing resources/ideas, and ignoring. Although these behaviors may appear harmless, victims often reported these forms of bullying to be more harmful than overtly

hostile behaviors (Hutchinson et al., 2010). These non-verbal behaviors, described by the participants in this study, were used as covert attempts to isolate the targeted teachers without bringing attention to the bully. This kind of behavior left the targeted teachers feeling confused and frustrated.

The findings in this study suggest that the behaviors associated with horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting are often covert and passive aggressive. The behaviors are both verbal and non-verbal in nature. Teacher targets are likely to experience belittling, humiliating, isolation, and exclusion during a horizontal workplace bullying experience.

5.1.2 Describing the bully – “The devil works down the hall from me”

Horizontal workplace bullies in the K-12 setting operate by publicly humiliating, excessively scrutinizing, and turning against their targets. Namie’s (2003) research suggests that workplace bullies can be sorted into four categories: the Screaming Mimi, the Constant Critic, the Two-Headed Snake, and the Gatekeeper. The Screaming Mimi is described as a bully who controls emotions and contaminates the workplace. The Screaming Mimi humiliates targets to promote fear in witnesses (Namie, 2003). The Constant Critic nitpicks and scrutinizes everything. This obsessive analysis attempts to conceal the bully’s insecurities (Namie, 2003). The Two-Headed Snake insults the character of the target by spreading rumors to turn colleagues against one another. This behavior occurs to boost the bully’s self-image (Namie, 2003). The Gatekeeper is consumed by control, and they use this control to ensure failure of their victims (Namie, 2003). The brief descriptions of the bullies presented in this study did not provide enough information to classify the bullies into these four categories; however, it is important to acknowledge the

emotionally charged language that the participants used to describe their bully and their behavior.

5.1.3 Causes of horizontal workplace bullying – “She was a better teacher and they knew it”

Contrary to schoolyard bullying targets, workplace bullying victims are not targeted because they are loners or weaklings (Namie, 2000). In fact, it is quite the opposite. The best and most innovative teacher in the building is most often the target. The participants in this study believed a teacher’s skill set, willingness to embrace change, and level of energy made colleagues feel threatened and insecure. This “threatening behavior” was described by the participants to be the catalyst of their experience with horizontal workplace bullying. Namie (2000) reports that most employees who experience workplace bullying are targeted because they pose a perceived “threat” to their bully.

Teachers in this study explained “going above and beyond” (e.g., being responsive to parents, volunteering for committees, holding informal leadership positions, or working beyond the contractual day) makes bullies “look bad” and therefore increased their risk of becoming a target for horizontal workplace bullying. DeMore Palmer (2011) found victims of horizontal bullying were questioned about voluntarily exceeding contractual obligations and were accused of making other colleagues “look bad.”

Interpersonal conflict can be another catalyst for horizontal workplace bullying (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2010; Pfeffer, 2007; Seigne et al., 2007; Vardi & Weitz, 2004; Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Interpersonal bullying is described as a breakdown in communication and/or a personality conflict between the bully and the target (Johnson et al.,

2015). The participants in this study believed having a disagreement, being guilty by association, not becoming part of a group, and getting the job over someone else were antecedents to horizontal bullying that surfaced due to interpersonal conflict.

Hoel and Salin (2003) suggest that bullying is more likely to occur in organizations that are often undergoing change. During periods of change, employees perceive a greater sensation of increased pressure and workload. Participants perceived that embracing change and being new to the building/department/grade level were catalysts for horizontal workplace bullying. Both themes described a change within the organization, whether a curricular change (e.g., implementing technology) or a change to the team dynamic.

The participants in this study suggested that workplace bullying manifests in the K-12 setting in response to a perceived threat, an interpersonal conflict, or a change within the organization. They reported jealousy and voluntarily exceeding contractual obligations as the most frequent triggers of horizontal workplace bullying. These findings suggest that teachers who are “doing something different,” such as integrating technology (e.g., blogs, online portfolios, Skyping, videos), co-teaching, or are more energetic are at risk of becoming a target. Likewise, teachers who are more responsive to parents and work beyond the work day are also likely to become a target of horizontal workplace bullying.

5.2 REACTIONS – “I DON’T CONFRONT ANYBODY. I JUST KIND OF KEEP TO MYSELF”

Namie (2000) found that workplace bullying targets are typically non-confrontive. They do not typically respond to aggression with aggression. However, the unintended consequence for their

submissiveness is that the bully can continue to act with impunity until the employer addresses the situation (Namie, 2000). Many of the participants in this study described themselves as “non-confrontational” and “non-combative.” They explained responding to the aggression passively by keeping to themselves, going about their own business and continuing to support their colleagues. In several cases, the participants addressed the situation with their principals with the hope that the horizontal workplace bullying would be addressed.

These findings suggest that teacher targets react to workplace bullying passively. They are not likely to confront their bully. Instead, the targets will keep to themselves, ignore the behavior, and continue to display good organizational citizenship (Baillien et al., 2009). Namie (2013) explains that teacher targets often turn their backs to bullying behavior and focus on their work, because they exhibit the desire to heal, help, teach and nurture impressionable minds, rather than engaging in conflict.

5.2.1 Emotion – “It’s been a rollercoaster of emotions”

The discussion surrounding reactions to horizontal workplace bullying elicited responses that depicted emotion from the teachers who participated in this study. This suggests that teachers react to horizontal workplace bullying physically and emotionally. Physical responses present as a reaction to a bullying behavior, whereas emotional responses are used to describe the feelings surrounding the experience. These findings suggest that, although teachers will keep to themselves, ignore the behavior, and continue to display good organizational citizenship, they still feel emotion surrounding the bullying behavior, and the emotions are powerful. Teachers who experience horizontal workplace bullying feel angry, surprised, sad, disgusted, and fearful; however, these emotions remain confined.

5.2.2 Coping – “Bitching and booze, lots of booze”

Blasé, Blasé, and Du (2008) found that teachers were more likely to cope with workplace bullying by discussing the situation with a co-worker or family member. All of the participants in this study described using a friend, family member, or a colleague as a support to cope with horizontal workplace bullying. Several of the participants also found reprieve by doing nothing and/or consuming alcohol.

The findings suggest that teachers cope with horizontal workplace bullying by developing a support network made up of friends, family, and colleagues. The support network serves as an outlet to vent, share stories, and commiserate with others. The participants in this study reported that their support networks were the single most effective mechanism for coping with their workplace bullying experience. Teachers who are at risk for becoming a target of horizontal workplace bullying should develop a strong network of friends and family to use for support if they begin to experience this behavior. The participants in this study suggest using this support network to “bitch,” commiserate, seek advice, and vent about the experience as a way of releasing emotional frustration.

Teachers in this study also reported coping with workplace bullying by doing nothing (e.g., minimizing communication and distancing themselves) and consuming alcohol. The participants found that distancing themselves from their bully and continuing to go about their own business was another way to cope with this behavior. Although it did not prevent the behavior from occurring, this coping strategy provided the participants with some reprieve from continuous attacks.

5.3 EFFECTS ON PERSONAL GROWTH – “I HAVE THICK SKIN NOW”

DeMore Palmer (2011) found that informal teacher leaders who reported being the target of horizontal bullying devalued leadership opportunities. Teachers who chose not to take on informal leadership roles were influenced by how they would be perceived by their resistant colleagues (DeMore Palmer, 2011). The participants in this study unanimously reported that they had *not* passed up an opportunity for professional growth during the time of their workplace bullying. These findings were refreshing, yet surprising. In contrast to DeMore Palmer’s (2011) study, the participants in this study had committed to and had been serving in their informal leadership roles prior to the onset of the bullying. These findings suggest that teachers who are holding an informal leadership role do not allow horizontal workplace bullying to affect their professional growth. Professional effects of workplace bullying for these teachers were likely to manifest as feeling professionally self-conscious and second guessing thoughts and ideas rather than stunting professional growth.

5.3.1 Personal effects – “It caused sleepless nights”

Workplace bullying can have significant physical and psychological health effects on the victims (Namie, 2003). The participants in this study reported experiencing psychological, social, and physical effects. Psychological effects were reported most often throughout the study and were described as having anxiety, paranoia, loss of sense of self, and isolation. Fahie and Devine (2012) found that “self-identified” workplace bullying victims experience psychological effects including feelings of being alone, fear, anxiety, loss of sense of self, isolation and vulnerability,

anger, feeling upset, paranoia, self-doubt, and humiliation. The participants in this study reported crying, not being oneself, and worrying about what the bullies were going to say.

Fahie and Devine (2012) found physical effects including sleeplessness, nightmares, upset stomach and digestive complications, skin irritations, and weight loss/gain. A couple of participants reported physical effects that included sleepless nights and exhaustion. Exhaustion was described as being tired of fighting a never-ending battle. Several participants described experiencing social effects from horizontal workplace bullying, which included pulling back from social situations such as not attending social events (e.g., happy hours or holiday parties).

These findings suggest that horizontal workplace bullying can have significant physical and psychological effects on the teachers. Teachers who are being bullied in the workplace are likely to experience self-consciousness and self-doubt professionally, while experiencing psychological, social, and physical effects personally.

5.3.2 Organizational effects – “I will consider getting away from them because I just can’t stand it anymore”

Workplace bullying affects the organization, causing decreased job satisfaction, poor performance and high levels of attrition or turnover (Quine, 2001; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005). Frequent turnover within a building is an indicator that horizontal workplace bullying may be present among the teachers. INTO (2006) found that more than one tenth of their sample of teachers reported leaving their school as a direct coping mechanism for workplace bullying. Teachers who were interviewed for this study reported that having an opportunity to leave their current position would be a welcomed change to alleviate the constant battle with their bullies. They explained that experiencing the bullying behavior is exhausting and exiting the building,

department, or grade level was perceived as a way to combat the bullying experience. These findings echo earlier findings that bullying in the workplace can affect the culture of an organization by creating a toxic work environment which can lead to frequent turnover (Hoel, Einarsen, & Cooper, 2003). Frequent requests from teachers to relocate within the organization, or leave the organization altogether may be indicative of a culture that is breeding workplace bullying behavior.

5.3.3 Horizontal workplace bullying: A technical problem or an adaptive challenge?

The data discussed in this section suggest that horizontal workplace bullying is a serious problem that affects the victims in many ways. Yet, the victims and their administrators apparently lack the knowledge and skills to change this behavior. However, before this behavior can be changed, it needs to be identified. Is workplace bullying a technical problem or an adaptive challenge? Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) define technical problems and adaptive challenges as follows:

Technical problems may be very complex and critically important, they have known solutions that can be implemented by current knowhow. They can be resolved through the application of authoritative expertise and through the organization's current structures, procedure and ways of doing things. Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties. Making progress requires going beyond any authoritative expertise to mobilize discovery, shedding certain entrenched ways, tolerating losses, and generating the new capacity to thrive anew (p.19).

One could argue that horizontal workplace bullying is a technical problem that can be fixed by providing teachers and administrators with professional development to identify and address this behavior in the organization, thus increasing the authoritative expertise surrounding this phenomenon. Implementing policies that prohibit bullying in the workplace would provide organizational structures and procedures for addressing this problem.

One could also argue that horizontal workplace bullying is very much an adaptive challenge and one that can only be fixed by changing the culture and climate of the organization. The data presented previously suggests that horizontal workplace bullying manifests most often through professional jealousy and when teachers voluntarily exceed contractual obligations. Changing these habits or beliefs requires one to shed an entrenched negative belief surrounding these characteristics.

Heifetz et al. (2009) suggest that problems do not always come neatly packaged as “technical” or “adaptive,” but rather most problems come mixed with “technical and adaptive elements intertwined” (p. 19). Horizontal workplace bullying is a problem that must be explored further through both technical and adaptive lenses.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

Prior to discussing the implications of this study’s findings, it is essential to review its limitations. The main limitation of this study is the generalizability of its findings. The small sample size (6), homogeneous ethnicity, limited geographic location, and participant assignments limit the study’s conclusions to describing horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting to

the teachers interviewed. Further research is needed to determine whether these findings are true of a larger, more diverse population.

Participants were asked to describe their experience with horizontal workplace bullying. Some of these experiences occurred long ago. The lapse of time that had passed between the bullying experience and the interview could have distorted the teachers' memories of these encounters. In addition, the self-selecting nature of the participants did not allow for insight into the experiences of teachers who chose not to participate in this study. Further research might explore perspectives of other educators, including teacher bullies and administrators.

Qualitative content analysis is intersubjective work. It is possible that another researcher could provide a different interpretation of the interview transcripts (Willig, 2009). An attempt to minimize alternative interpretations while coding included the use of inter coder agreement with a research assistant.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS

This section specifies the implications of the study's findings for research and practice. The findings address the gap in the literature and suggest opportunities for future research. The implications for practice include policy development and training possibilities as solutions for intervention.

5.5.1 Implications for research

Current literature on workplace bullying attempts to define and further clarify this phenomenon. Research specific to horizontal workplace bullying in the K-12 setting is minimal and warrants further investigation.

Future researchers may want to replicate this study on a larger scale. A larger, more diverse sample collected over a larger geographical location would aid in stronger generalizability of findings. Further explorations into horizontal bullying in the K-12 setting may also want to investigate the effect that race, gender, age, or seniority have on this phenomenon. This could help determine if horizontal workplace in the K-12 setting parallels horizontal workplace bullying in other professions.

Future researchers may want to design a longitudinal study that allows for frequent check-ins with the participants over the course of their horizontal workplace bullying experience. This design would eliminate the potential distortion of teachers' memories surrounding their experience due to the lapse of time between when the bullying occurred and when the interviews were conducted.

Furthermore, future researchers may want to allow for insight into the perspectives of other educators, including administrators, teacher bullies, or paraprofessionals. This research, conducted through multiple perspectives will help increase the awareness and understanding of horizontal workplace bullying and how it manifests in the K-12 setting.

5.5.2 Implications for practice

When I was a teacher, I was a victim of relentless horizontal workplace bullying. My experiences paralleled many of the experiences of the participants in this study. I shared their reactions, their coping strategies, and the effects that horizontal workplace bullying had on their lives. I remember feeling as though nothing was being done, or that nothing could be done to stop this experience. Now, as an administrator, I work with teachers who have fallen victim to this same behavior. I am still plagued by the questions: what can I do to help these teachers find relief from this damaging behavior? How do I address this behavior? What can be done to prevent this behavior? How do I create a culture where innovation and working beyond the contract are viewed as positive attributes, rather than ones that promote horizontal workplace bullying? I have wanted to provide a solution, to provide reprieve, and to create a culture where this phenomenon no longer exists.

Knowing that horizontal workplace bullying is a complex and critical problem that is both technical and adaptive in nature, I offer some technical solutions followed by a discussion about the adaptive challenges presented by this behavior.

5.5.2.1 Technical solutions to horizontal workplace bullying

Heifetz (1994) describes technical solutions as knowledge that has been “digested and put in the form of a legitimized set of known organizational procedures guiding what to do and role authorizations guiding who should do it” (p. 72). Technical solutions are clear, and solutions are relatively easy to implement. Technical solutions to horizontal workplace bullying are described below.

All school district employees should be cognizant of the potential for horizontal bullying to occur within the workplace, especially since the National Educational Association reported that 31.7% of school faculty and staff stated that they have been bullied by a colleague (Bradshaw & Figiel, 2012). Raising awareness about horizontal workplace bullying is crucial. School district employees should engage in professional development about workplace bullying, including identifying and coping with bullying behaviors.

Organizations should begin to develop workplace bullying policies that include the enforcement process, investigator training, and restorative interventions (Johnson, 2009; Namie & Namie, 2004). Policies should align with the district's mission to create a safe workplace and should include, "a clear definition, a declaration of bullying's unacceptability, an extension of hostile workplace protections to everyone and a prohibition of retaliation against complainants or participants in investigations" (Namie, 2004, p. 329). In addition to organizational policies, the NEA suggests that the bargaining unit include strong contractual language to protect their members from being subject to bullying behavior on the part of their co-workers (National Education Association, 2013).

5.5.2.2 Adaptive challenges of horizontal workplace bullying

Heifetz (1994) describes an adaptive challenge as a change that takes time and involves new learning. It entails a shift in mindset and values. This adaptive challenge requires the teachers to play an active role in the solution by adopting new beliefs and behaviors. The adaptive challenge surrounding horizontal workplace bullying is discussed below.

Identifying risk factors will help administrators proactively address and protect potential targeted teachers. The findings in this study suggest that teachers who have a strong skill set, are innovative, energetic, and are willing to voluntarily go above and beyond their contractual

obligations are likely to become targets of horizontal workplace bullying. If administrators are aware of these risk factors, proactive approaches to combating this behavior should be tackled by leading an adaptive change. Because this problem lies in the teachers, the solution lies in them, too. This adaptive challenge requires the administrator to mobilize the teachers to engage in the hard work of changing attitudes, competencies, beliefs, priorities, and loyalties to create a culture that commends and supports the exceptional work and skill sets of their colleagues, not one that denigrates them. Leading an adaptive change is not an easy task, but one that is necessary as a solution for horizontal workplace bullying. Heifetz et al. (2009) provide tools and tactics to help a leader take on this change.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal the demoralization and maltreatment that teachers experience through horizontal bullying. In a field that focuses an abundance of time teaching children about bullying, it is alarming that the very teachers who serve as role models to the children deploy inexcusable bullying tactics on their colleagues. Teacher bullies attack with the intent to terrorize their targets. These attacks occur most often out of jealousy or out of the belief that the targets are “making them look bad” by trying new things or exceeding contractual obligations. Teacher bullies belittle, humiliate, isolate, and exclude their targets. This behavior leaves the targeted teachers feeling anxious, embarrassed, and frustrated. While all the participants in this study reported that horizontal workplace bullying behavior did *not* affect their professional growth, it did have significant personal effects on them. Targeted teachers display a stoic façade at work while concealing high levels of psychological and physical distress. Horizontal

workplace bullying has lasting psychological effects on the targeted teachers; in some cases, the targeted teachers believed the only practical reprieve from this behavior was to exit their current position.

It is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of horizontal workplace bullying and how it manifests in the K-12 setting so that teachers and administrators understand and can address the risk factors and behaviors that accompany this phenomenon. Identifying risk factors and behaviors will help school districts develop policies that specifically outline unacceptable actions and predetermined consequences for exhibiting this behavior in the workplace. Identifying the technical and adaptive challenges that face this phenomenon will help drive change in the field.

My hope for this study is twofold. First, I hope that this study gives teachers affected by horizontal workplace bullying a voice—a voice that unveils the callousness of their bullies. Second, I hope that this study will promote the development of policies to prevent teachers from enduring such harrowing experiences.

APPENDIX A

SNOWBALL SAMPLING RECRUITMENT SCRIPT/FLYER

The following script was used for snowball sampling. This script will be given to participants after they have expressed an interest in the study. The recruitment flyer will be attached to this script.

Dear [Mr. / Ms. LAST NAME],

Thank you for your interest in Teachers' Perceptions of the Manifestation of Horizontal Bullying in the K-12 Setting. I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to pass along the enclosed information to friends and/or colleagues who may also be interested in learning about this research study. You are under no obligation to share this information.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Shaw

Include enclosure(s):

Recruitment materials – Teachers Bullying Teachers Flyer

Teachers Bullying Teachers?



Have You Been Bullied By A Colleague At Work?

This research study is looking for teachers who are currently working in the K-12 setting who have been bullied or who have witnessed bullying by a colleague at work. The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the manifestation of teacher-to-teacher bullying in the workplace. If you are interested in participating in an interview to tell your story please contact:

sjs164@pitt.edu

University of Pittsburgh

Figure 3. *Recruitment Flyer*

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

This informed consent form was reviewed with all participants prior to beginning the interview.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Manifestation of Horizontal Bullying in the K-12 Setting

Informed Consent

The purpose of this research study is to explore teachers' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal bullying in the K-12 setting (e.g. how teachers react when confronted by a teacher bully, how teachers cope with teacher bullies, identifying the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on teachers' professional growth, etc.). For this reason, I will be interviewing K-12 teachers from a variety of school districts around the Pittsburgh area. All participants must be teachers who are currently working in the K-12 setting in a public school. If you are willing to participate in the interview you will be asked about your general background (e.g. How long have you been in your present position? How long have you been a teacher? Briefly describe your role in the school, etc.).

During this research I will ask you to participate an interview. This is a confidential interview that will last about sixty minutes. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed

for data collection and coding purposes. The recorded audio files will be deleted after the interview is transcribed. The transcribed interviews will be stored in password-protected files. Direct quotes from the interview may be included in the analysis, however all names and work locations will be changed to protect your identity.

Teachers routinely discuss their interactions with colleagues in and out of the workplace and the interview questions are not sensitive in nature. The risks associated with this research are minimal and your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable.

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this research study; however, the information gained from this research may benefit other teachers now or in the future. These findings may increase awareness of horizontal bullying in the K-12 setting. The findings may also aid in the development of targeted intervention programs and policy development.

The main researcher conducting this study is Sarah Shaw, a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Sarah Shaw at sjs164@pitt.edu or at (412) 327-8609. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the University of Pittsburgh Human Subject Protection Advocate at 1-866-212-2668.

Do you give your consent to participate in this research study, including an audio recorded interview?

Yes or No (Circle one)

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (VICTIM)

The following interview questions guided the semi-structured interview with the participants. The interview questions were developed based on the research questions that this study is seeking to answer. The interviews will begin with general questions to build rapport with the participants. The interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed.

Interview Questions

You have been selected to participate in this interview because you have identified yourself as a teacher in a K-12 public school setting who has experienced horizontal (teacher-to-teacher) bullying in the workplace. We will begin the interview by asking a few background questions.

1. Interviewee Background

- a. How long have you been in your present position?
- b. How long have you been a teacher?
- c. How long had you been in your position when the bullying incident occurred?
- d. Briefly describe your role in the school.

For the past two decades, there has been substantial academic and professional research on workplace bullying. According to the 2014 Workplace Bullying Institute's U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, 27% of American employees experienced bullying behavior at work, 21% have been a witness, and 72% are aware that it is happening in their workplace (Namie, 2014). More specifically related to teaching, the National Educational Association reported that 31.7% of

school faculty and staff stated that they have been bullied by a colleague, based on the results of the NEA Bullying Survey (Bradshaw, & Figiel, 2012).

Workplace bullying is defined as physical or verbal harassing, offending, or socially excluding behaviors that may include being humiliated, ridiculed, ignored, excluded, shouted at, receiving hints that you should quit your job, receiving persistent criticism and/or excessive monitoring of your work in the workplace. This behavior must occur repeatedly, regularly and over a period of time.

The term 'Horizontal Bullying' is derived from research about workplace bullying in the nursing profession. Horizontal bullying is bullying behavior conducted by a teacher or a group of teachers towards a coworker or a group of teachers. Horizontal bullying is harmful behavior that controls, humiliates, degrades, or undermines a teacher's right to dignity at work. Keep these definitions in mind throughout the interview as you answer these questions.

Let's begin.

2. What are the victims' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying?
 - a. Describe an interaction that you have had with another teacher that you believe was an example of horizontal workplace bullying?
 - b. What bullying behaviors did you experience?
 - c. How would you describe this teacher's teaching experience compared to yours (e.g. more, less or equal experience)?
 - d. Explain how this interaction began?
 - e. Why do you believe that you were the target of this behavior?
 - f. Describe periods of time when the bullying behavior was more intense?
 - g. Describe times when the bullying behavior subsided?
 - h. What you believe to be the reason for this?
3. How do teacher victims react when confronted by a teacher bully?
 - a. Describe the reaction you had when this teacher confronted you?
 - b. Explain any other reactions that occurred throughout the course of these

incidents?

- c. Were these reactions commensurate with how you preferred to react? If not, describe your ideal reaction? What prevented this reaction from occurring?
 - d. Would you react the same way if confronted again by this individual? Why?
 - e. What were the reactions of your colleagues during these interactions?
4. How do teacher victims cope with horizontal workplace bullying?
- a. Explain the feelings that you had throughout this situation?
 - b. How did you find relief from these emotions?
 - c. Describe the steps you took to intervene in this situation.
 - d. Describe the steps that you took to prevent future occurrences from happening.
 - e. How has horizontal workplace bullying affected you personally?
5. What, if any, are the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on professional growth?
- a. How have these interactions affected you professionally?
 - b. Explain any professional opportunities that you chose not to participate in because of the horizontal workplace bullying?
6. Why did you decide to participate in this study?

Post interview Comments and/or Observations:

APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (WITNESS)

The following interview questions guided the semi-structured interview with the participants. The interview questions were developed based on the research questions that this study is seeking to answer. The interviews will begin with general questions to build rapport with the participants. The interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed.

Interview Questions

You have been selected to participate in this interview because you have identified yourself as a teacher in a K-12 public school setting who has experienced horizontal (teacher-to-teacher) bullying in the workplace. We will begin the interview by asking a few background questions.

1. Interviewee Background

- a. How long have you been in your present position?
- b. How long have you been a teacher?
- c. How long had you been in your position when the bullying incident occurred?
- d. Briefly describe your role in the school.

For the past two decades, there has been substantial academic and professional research on workplace bullying. According to the 2014 Workplace Bullying Institute's U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, 27% of American employees experienced bullying behavior at work, 21% have

been a witness, and 72% are aware that it is happening in their workplace (Namie, 2014). More specifically related to teaching, the National Educational Association reported that 31.7% of school faculty and staff stated that they have been bullied by a colleague, based on the results of the NEA Bullying Survey (Bradshaw, & Figiel, 2012).

Workplace bullying is defined as physical or verbal harassing, offending, or socially excluding behaviors that may include being humiliated, ridiculed, ignored, excluded, shouted at, receiving hints that you should quit your job, receiving persistent criticism and/or excessive monitoring of your work in the workplace. This behavior must occur repeatedly, regularly and over a period of time.

The term 'Horizontal Bullying' is derived from research about workplace bullying in the nursing profession. Horizontal bullying is bullying behavior conducted by a teacher or a group of teachers towards a coworker or a group of teachers. Horizontal bullying is harmful behavior that controls, humiliates, degrades, or undermines a teacher's right to dignity at work. Keep these definitions in mind throughout the interview as you answer these questions. Let's begin.

2. What are the teachers' perceptions surrounding the manifestation of horizontal workplace bullying?
 - a. Describe an interaction that you have witnessed that you believe was an example of horizontal workplace bullying?
 - b. What bullying behaviors did you witness?
 - c. How would you describe the victim teacher's teaching experience compared to the perpetrator (e.g. more, less or equal experience)?
 - d. Explain how this interaction began?
 - e. Why do you believe that the victim was the target of this behavior?
 - f. Describe periods of time when the bullying behavior was more intense?
 - g. Describe times when the bullying behavior subsided?
 - h. What you believe to be the reason for this?
3. How do teachers react when working with a teacher bully?
 - a. Describe the reaction you had when you witnessed this interaction?
 - b. Explain any other reactions that occurred throughout the course of these

incidents?

- c. Were these reactions commensurate with how you preferred to react? If not, describe your ideal reaction? What prevented this reaction from occurring?
 - d. Would you react the same way if you witnessed this confrontation again by this individual? Why?
 - e. What were the reactions of your colleagues during these interactions?
4. How do teachers cope with horizontal workplace bullying?
- a. Explain the feelings that you had throughout this situation?
 - b. How did you find relief from these emotions?
 - c. Describe the steps you took to intervene in this situation.
 - d. Describe the steps that you took to prevent future occurrences from happening.
 - e. How has horizontal workplace bullying affected you personally?
5. What, if any, are the implications of horizontal workplace bullying on professional growth?
- a. How have these interactions affected you professionally?
 - b. Explain any professional opportunities that you chose not to participate in because of the horizontal workplace bullying?
6. Why did you decide to participate in this study?

Post interview Comments and/or Observations:

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