

# Basic Education Teachers and Workplace Bullying: Experiences In a Public Elementary School

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*Abstract* — Work place bullying when left unchecked would cost high both in terms of human and material capital. Teachers who are bullied exhibit certain behavioral patterns. The study aimed at determining whether there is correlation between the respondents' personal attributes and their perspectives on the existence of factors antecedent to workplace bullying. It also determined the existence of a formal organization structure to prevent bullying and determine if there is a need for training and seminar on workplace bullying. By using questionnaire survey as a tool to gather data, the study measured, through their "lens" four factors antecedent to workplace bullying. The study area is in Daliao, Toril, Davao City at Sta. Clara Elementary School. The study revealed that there is a weak correlation between the respondents' personal attributes and descriptors of workplace bullying. Except on the presence of injustice in promotion where majority of elementary and secondary school teachers considered present in the workplace. The factor of injustice in promotion is culture laden. In general, factors leading to workplace bullying is not rampant in the respondents' workplaces. But the organization is not completely free from behaviors antecedent to workplace bullying. Majority of the respondents considered that formal organizational structure to prevent workplace bullying is established likewise majority claimed that they have not experienced attending a school sponsored training and seminar on workplace bullying.

*Keywords* — *Workplace Bullying, Teachers, Public Elementary School, Correlation*

## I. Introduction

Workplace bullying is a phenomenon caused by multi-causalities. Among which are: a) perception of injustice; b) social exclusion; c) leadership style d) prevailing cultural orientation; e) organizational environments; f) organizational dynamism.

The study adheres to the theoretical framework of Salin (2021) of Helsinki University, Finland, that workplace bullying may be analyzed by looking into work environment factors such as: a) motivating factors; b) precipitating processes; and c) enabling structures and processes. There are two reasons for adopting it as the theoretical framework.

Firstly, it is preventive in nature. The framework analyzes bullying as it focuses on the antecedent factors rather than on the occurrence and results. Secondly, it is systemic in approach. The comprehensiveness of the factors subject to analysis tends to paint the true picture of

organization as a social system thereby transcending geographical and cultural orientation of the study area. The framework is applicable regardless of political and social boundaries.

Prevention of workplace bullying is preventing the loss and a wastage of both precious human and material resources in the organization. Based on literature, when bullying is left unchecked, it would cost high on the organization. It could result to: absenteeism, lack of productivity, encountering various health problems, early retirement and /or resignation; and in general, lack of motivation to perform tasks. According to Hoel and Salin; job insecurity and turn over are some of the common results arising from organizational competition and structural changes (Hoel & Salin, 2020).

As previously mentioned, workplace bullying is a silent predatory happening even in schools with teachers and school administrators as bully, and teachers are the victims who quietly suffer the intimidation and mental torture. A small elementary public school is the focus of this study, the Sta. Clara Elementary School in Daliao, Toril, Davao City. The situation may or may not happen to other public elementary schools in other schools or districts, but the data gathered from the study may serve other public schools as well.

Teacher-on-teacher workplace bullying is different than student bullying. It is more than the occasional meanness or common conflict issues (Mulvahill, 2020). Bullying occurs over a period of time with frequent direct or indirect acts towards an individual. It is not always easily identifiable (Merilainen et al., 2019). Acts of bullying may include rude and abusive language, spreading rumors, public embarrassment, and isolation in a repetitive, negative manner. Workplace bullying is the overall mistreatment of a person (Orange, 2018). Having experienced workplace bullying myself, it has been one of the most difficult and stressful situations I had to deal with in my life. I was never popular as a child because I was always opinionated and stood up for what I believed was right. Dealing with bullying both as a child and now as an adult, I can attest that workplace bullying is extremely different and considerably tougher to manage.

#### *Teachers Experiences in Their Work*

Bullying is all about the power imbalance between the bully and the victim. The reason a person bullies another individual is to be superior to the other person, wanting to make the victim feel inferior and alone (Mulvahill, 2020). The victims feel unable to defend themselves in a situation (Merilainen et al., 2019). The bully wears down the victim (Maruro, 2019) and manipulates school culture by ostracizing, snubbing, and excluding the victim. The bully has the victims believing that they are inadequate, ineffective, and deserving of the negative behaviors. Often, the bullies think that they are just doing their jobs and fail to identify their actions as bullying (Merilainen et al., 2019). Once the victim sees this narrative, the bully's action appears logical and the power cycle is complete.

Bullying plays a toll on a person in multiple ways. Victims suffer traumatic effects from bullying mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally (Fachie & Devine, 2021). Bullying is a

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trauma to the victim, which generates severe emotional reactions such as anxiety, shock, fear, helplessness, and negative self-worth (Maiuro, 2019). I have personally experienced many of these emotions. Many victims of bullying suffer from severe health problems, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Maiuro, 2019). The consequences of such exposure to bullying may be both psychologically and physically debilitating for the victim.

The most common physical effect of workplace bullying is sleeplessness or disturbed sleep, including horrible dreams. The bullying experiences invade their subconscious and trigger violent dreams. Other physical effects include headaches, stomach pains, skin irritation, weight gain or loss, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Psychological effects influence individuals in different ways. Everyone can experience a wide range of effects, from no psychological effects to suicidal thoughts. Victims will often experience a loss of sense of self and where they are positioned in the world (Fachie & Devine, 2021). Victims of bullying take a hit to their confidence and morale. The entire experience is extremely stressful and can be painful (Mulvahill, 2020). Victims of workplace bullying suffer from insecurities, anxiety, vengefulness, poor social skills to protect their own self-esteem, personality conflicts, and gender issues (Orange, 2018). Victims use several negative coping strategies to deal with bullying, such as seeking revenge, substance abuse, suppressing emotional responses, and alcohol consumption (Fachie & Devine, 2021). These actions compound the physical and psychological effects that the victim already suffers.

The victims continue to suffer in their workplace while trying to teach, and from the financial effect of missed days of work due to the bullying. Workplace bullying negatively affects teaching and learning in schools. The victims are less tolerant, humorous, and patient. They suffer from difficulty concentrating and using their prep time effectively (Orange, 2018). It is difficult to say whether the victims have low self-esteem or anxiety, which makes them more likely to be bullied and could be a result of the long-term workplace bullying (Merilainen et al., 2019). Teachers who suffer from workplace bullying take increased sick days. Bullying-based teachers' sick leave costs the Finnish Trade Union of Education nearly 15 million dollars a year. The costs do not stop there. The organizations have additional costs associated to workplace bullying, such as legal costs, loss of productivity, reputation, and the overall organizational culture. Society also experiences hardship through growing medical costs and premature retirement.

Bullying in schools is a systemic problem that can be related to leadership practices. Bullies often seek allies with leaders and get into leadership positions because of it. It is difficult to make bullies accountable or even acknowledge that the problem exists if the organization is allied with them (Merilaine et al., 2019). Bullying is commonly fostered by poor ineffective leadership that contributes to the destructive and unhealthy behavior in the workplace. Ineffective leaders avoid confronting the problem and are indifferent to the bullying situation (Fachie, et al 2021). When upper management does not address the bullying behavior, it makes the problem worse (Orange, 2018). Leaders can enable or even include bullying behaviors. Leadership practices and social relationships contribute to the issue (Merilainen et al., 2019). Some school administrators engage

in bullying of their teachers by using threatening behavior, disrespecting teachers, verbally abusing, socially isolating, showing favoritism, and nepotism (Orange, 2018). As demands and unclear work expectations increase related to “tasks, obligations, privileges, and priorities,” there is the potential of increased bullying behavior towards others (Maiuro, 2019). Change needs to happen at the organizational level, which is more effective than with just an individual. When workplace bullying is condoned by leaders in the organization, the bullying will only continue. Administrators will skillfully create teaching assignments with the purpose of isolating the victim in order to avoid having to deal with conflict. This tactic only makes the situation worse on the victim and can quickly lead the victim to depression and wanting to quit teaching.

Bullying is also sometimes referred to as mobbing, workplace abuse, workplace harassment (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2022) scapegoating, health endangered leadership, and even petty tyranny (Einarsen, 2020). These names are synonyms with the only difference between mobbing and the other terms being that mobbing is used to refer to a group of perpetrators rather than just one (Dereshiwsy, 2020). However, all of the terms refer to the same behavior (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2022). This behavior is said to last at least six months (Leymann, 2019) and occurs regularly (Caponecchia et al., 2020). It aims to discomfort, break down or torment (Einarsen, 2020) an unwilling target (Namie, 2022). Workplace bullying is normally psychological, with most attacks being covert (Namie, 2022) though bullying can become physical, it seldom does (Einarsen, 2020). This typical discreetness can make the behaviors hard to pinpoint (Einarsen, 2021) and therefore prove (Beng, 2019).

Workplace bullying is considered as being ‘status-blind’ in that gender and race aren’t considered contributing factors to why people are targeted (Namie, 2022). In addition, the laws which have been put in place with the intention of preventing discrimination against protected classes, do not apply to general workplace bullying (Dereshiwsy, 2020). Of note is that only a quarter of bullying cases are reported to involve people from protected groups (Namie, 2022) which in part is probably due protected groups making up a smaller percentage of the researched countries’ populations. As a result of this though, there is often no legal remedy (Namie, 2022) for the majority of incidents.

It may also surprise you that bullies are actually more often women and we typically bully our own gender (Namie, 2022). It’s noteworthy that there’s nearly always a power disparity between the bully and the bullied (Aleassa & Megdadi, 2021) with seventy to eighty per cent of perpetrators being a workplace superior (Einarsen, 1999), so it’s a fight where the target has their hands tied from the start. Because of this, I use ‘target’ and not ‘victim’ because the idea of weakness and disempowerment (Dereshiwsy, 2020) ‘victim’ conjures is inaccurate. Workplace targets aren’t selected because they’re weak, it’s normally for the exact opposite reason (Dereshiwsy, 2020). The thing that leaves us open to bullying is the power difference (Einarsen, 2021) that restrains us and leaves us disadvantaged.

Bullying escalates in frequency and aggressiveness over time (Einarsen, 2020). It can be put into three stages, the first being subtle and indirect, the second being more direct, with the target being made to feel increasingly isolated, and the third can introduce physical violence alongside the psychological attacks (Einarsen, 2020).

Bullies can be put into four categories, the Screaming Mimi, Constant Critic, Two-Headed Snake, and the Gatekeeper (Namie, 2022). Though their names are amusing, their behaviors are less so. A *Screaming Mimi* is someone who sets the emotional mood of the room, deriving pleasure from public humiliation and using it to show what will happen if they're opposed (Namie, 2022). A *Constant Critic* is hyper-critical, constantly highlighting other people's perceived inabilities and flaws to distract people from noticing theirs. They invent errors to legitimize belittling others to keep them confused. They berate their targets privately, increasing their feelings of isolation (Namie, 2022). The *Two-Headed Snake* is a corporate climber, defaming those who block their path to promotion whilst ensuring that they're always believed by superiors (Namie, 2022). Finally, the *Gatekeeper*, obsessed with control, they manipulate variables to guarantee their target's failure to legitimize complaints they make against them (Namie, 2022).

It doesn't help that co-workers often don't support targeted colleagues either (Beng, 2019). This is known as 'bystander phenomenon', which is when people refrain from acting when they witness bullying, continuing as normal and inadvertently strengthening the bully (Zawadzki & Jensen, 2020). Reasons for this include a lack of understanding about the bullying taking place, incidents seeming trivial in isolation, fear of the bully, being under the bully's sway, or actually agreeing with the bully (Beng, 2019).

On average targets are bullied for twenty-two months (Namie, 2022). Methods used for attack are varied but can be categorized into five types. Those which attack the target's self-expression, social relationships, reputation, professional life, and finally, their physical and mental health (Beng, 2019). This might be carried out using anything from snubbing, to constantly criticizing the target, to sudden, violent verbal or physical attacks (Dereshiwsky, 2020). Over time, these attacks affect the target's physical and mental well-being, causing issues such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, insomnia, nausea, suicidal thoughts (Caponecchia et al., 2020), loss of concentration, post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), panic attacks (Namie, 2022), low self-esteem, stomach problems, back and headaches, anger, self-hatred (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2022) and cardiovascular stress-related diseases (Namie, 2022). All of these cause the target to become unproductive and unsuccessful, reducing their motivation, creativity, and causing an increase in errors (Aleassa & Megdadi, 2021).

It also increases turnover. Sadly, it is the target, not the bully, who will likely lose their job, either voluntarily or through dismissal, a 70% chance (Namie, 2022). Turnover doesn't only affect targets but institutions, too. Other negative effects on institutions include reduced productivity, profit, increased absenteeism, and the loss of customers (Aleassa and Megdadi, 2021). Lost staff

need replacing and new staff need training, along with legal fees and reputational damages if the bullying becomes public knowledge (Caponecchia et al., 2020).

So why do institutions allow bullying? For bullying to take place, institutions must allow or even encourage it (Einarsen, 2021). There are characteristics that workplaces with bullying tendencies share, including a focus on outcomes, promoting, and rewarding people with dominating personalities over emotionally intelligent ones, short-term planning, a code of conduct that doesn't prevent bullying behaviors, nepotism, cronyism, encouraging fear as the company culture, and finally, the misuse of performance reviews (Namie, 2022).

Academic writers have made recommendations with Namie (2022) creating a blueprint for employers, and Caponecchia, Branch and Murray (2020) creating a taxonomy of workplace intervention types. The former creating a new values-driven policy, credible enforcement procedures, restorative interventions, and training (Namie, 2022), and the later, a total of eleven intervention types (Caponecchia et al., 2020).

As mentioned, Namie's (2003) blueprint is a four-step plan for employers to follow. The first part is the creation of a new values-driven policy This involves making it clear that bullying is not part of the company culture, that all employees enjoy the same protections regardless of their protected class status, to clearly define what is considered bullying and to place bullying within the domain of health and safety, and finally to make sure people do not abuse the new protections with unnecessary complaints (Namie, 2022). The second part involves the implementation of third-party investigations, methods to change behavior rather than zero tolerance and considering incidence of retaliation as separate to normal bullying. The third part includes offering coaching and counselling to perpetrators and victims. Finally, the fourth part recommends providing training and workshops on bullying to educate staff about appropriate behavior (Namie, 2022).

Caponecchia's et al.'s (2020) eleven interventions came from analyzing seventeen intervention types and evaluating which were most effective. The recommendations overlap considerably with Namie. The eleven recommended interventions were conducting investigations, providing codes of conducts, counselling, bullying awareness training, coaching, system-wide interventions, skills and training development, values statements, local resolution, and organizational redesign.

It's interesting that most of the suggestions from either academic wouldn't cause companies excessive amounts of time or money but when institutions aren't interested in implementing such ideas, how can bullying ever be tamed? That many workplaces seem to encourage this behavior might explain why it remains so prevalent. The literature on bullying is rich and I've only scratched the surface of areas relevant to my experience, so why write another paper at all? Truthfully, the literature helps us understand a great deal about bullying but it doesn't share the reality of a target's experience. We can read facts about bullying and what it does but

that doesn't convey the emotional frustration or helplessness felt when it happens to you. Targets are often represented in an objective and anonymized way, not as a living person.

### *Workplace Bullying in Education*

Workplace bullying is repeated verbal abuse, psychological abuse, or both within an organizational environment. This mistreatment is typically coworker to coworker, supervisor to subordinate, or group to individual (Cranshaw, 2019). This type of bullying is an interpersonal hostility that is deliberate, repeated, and severe enough to cause harm to the targeted person's health or economic status (Namie & Namie, 2019). Further, "workplace bullying is driven by the perpetrator's need to control another individual, often undermining legitimate business interests in the process." Approximately 37 million or 27% of adult Americans reported direct experience with bullying or abusive behaviors at work. Those affected by workplace bullying (e.g. direct bullying and witnessing bullying), increases the number to 65.6 million, which is the equivalent of the combined population of 15 states (WBI, 2014). Because workplace bullying is legal, many targets of this abuse reluctantly resign, transfer offices, or end up being terminated (Namie & Namie, 2019). The actions just mentioned leave the problem of bullying unaddressed within the workplace.

Workplace bullying has to be displayed in a systematic manner (Ocel & Aydin, 2020). Even though Leymann (2019) originally defined workplace bullying as taking place over a long period of time (e.g. 6 months), Ocel and Aydin (2020) specified that the bullying can take place over a period of time with no specific number of weeks or months. Einarsen et al., (2019) stated that workplace bullying must be intentional, which is different from an uncivil coworker who is merely arrogant, obnoxious, or unintentionally offensive. Vanderkerkhove and Commers (2021) added that workplace bullying must involve a power imbalance that is typically seen in downward mobbing. Downward mobbing, which is the most prevalent form of workplace bullying and an abuse of power, involves the bully as the supervisor/manager and the target as the subordinate. Gök (2022) added that other forms of mobbing include upward mobbing, where employees harass, create obstacles, or undermine the efforts of a supervisor. Horizontal mobbing is typically colleague-to-colleague but involves a power imbalance between the two equal employees. The target of workplace bullying must view the behaviors as oppressive, unfair, and/or undermining for the behaviors to be considered workplace bullying (Ocel & Aydin, 2020). Lastly, Salin (2021) added that the behaviors of workplace bullying must create a hostile work environment.

Workplace bullying is not a new phenomenon because throughout history people have had power over one another (Murphy, 2021). In Bachrach and Baratz (1992) as cited by Murphy (2021) they first explored the concept of power, authority, and influence within work organizations. Another study, cited by Murphy (2021), Brodsky (1996) recognized that, aside from sexual harassment, a certain type of work harassment could repeatedly torment, wear down, intimidate, and frustrate a person. German Psychiatrist Heinz Leymann assigned the term *workplace*

*mobbing* to psychological terrorization in the workplace in the 1990s. Leymann's research acknowledged that psychological abuse in the workplace was an old concept that was never systematically described. In Leymann's research, the psychological harassment at work typically starts with an initial critical incident (e.g. envy over wages) and progresses to stigmatization where the bully feels justified in punishing the other person (Leymann, 2020). After the harassment takes place, the situation is typically reported to management where the investigator may be prejudiced against the victim. What Leymann found was that even though the victim is harassed (e.g. lied about), the manager may believe the lies and perpetuate the bullying by expelling (e.g. transferring, firing, or recommending resignation) the victim.

Even though Leymann's research provided insight into the details of abuse in the workplace, the topic of mobbing was not a priority in the United States (Bjorkqvist et al, 2019). In the United States, there was more interest in preventing sexual harassment than general work harassment. As a result, work harassment remained a typically European effort. However, in 1992, the European term workplace mobbing was later linked with the term workplace bullying by the American journalist Andrea Adams (Namie, 2022). In addition, social psychologists Gary and Ruth Namie introduced the term workplace bullying to the United States and advocated for the rights of American workers by establishing the *Workplace Bullying & Trauma Institute* in 2003.

A dysfunctional organizational structure is the perfect environment for workplace bullying (Einarsen et al., 2019). A dysfunctional organizational culture thrives on ineffective leadership, poor communication, little recognition of achievement, heavy workloads, and lack of manager support (Vanderkerkhove & Commers, 2021). Leymann (2020) added that examples of poorly organized institutions that report the most workplace bullying are hospitals, religious organizations, and schools. However, bullying can be anywhere and with anyone. Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen, and Olsen (2019), found that unskilled workers had a higher prevalence of being bullied in the workplace than managers or supervisors. People who worked with things (e.g. manufacturing) in male dominated job environments, and people who worked with clients or patients in female dominated job environments, reported more workplace bullying than individuals working with customers did. Salin (2021) added that the increasing casualness and informality of the workplace are reasons for increasing workplace bullying.

When organizations move away from what is considered professional behavior, when there is no policy for behavior, and when tough management is preferred, the result is an environment of workplace bullying. Onorato (2022) argued unethical issues in the current American society have influenced or "rubbed off" into the professional environment. Einarsen et al. (2019) added that workplace bullying originates with scapegoating a professional or group of professionals. In predatory workplace bullying, a professional who is different from the majority (e.g. the first woman firefighter) might be scapegoated and victimized because they have caused changes in the organization. In dispute-related workplace bullying, the office politics or organizational climate



may pit employees in certain job positions against others (e.g. younger teachers against older teachers).

Employees might experience stress if valuable resources were lost, low, or threatened (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2019). Employees subjected to bullying reported experiencing depletion of resources and unable to cope with the mistreatment (Hurley et al., 2019). The foundation of COR is an abundance of resources available for employees to manage challenging situations, which may enable proactive and resilient responses and stress prevention (Chen et al., 2019). Resilient employees may be able to navigate bullying in the workplace and emerge unscathed. Compared to Baillien et al. (2019), Rousseau et al. (2019) also identified resources employees valued, which are preservation of self and health and well-being. On the employer level, employees may view the organization as a source to provide resources (Rousseau et al., 2019); and one resource may be trust in management, which represents a resource to minimize employee susceptibility and perception of workplace bullying behaviors. If employees trust management, positive expectations may include trust in management to provide support, and employees can focus on work instead of worrying about possible acts of bullying. When employees do not trust management, the tendency is to operate in a self-preservation mode and perceive vague situations as bullying (Rousseau et al., 2019).

The study argues that there are three factors present in workplace bullying (Maiuro, 2019). These are: a) motivating, b) precipitating and c) enabling structures. As the paradigm shows the convergence of motivation and precipitating factors arising from process and procedures observed in the workplace may create enabling environment towards workplace bullying in the basic education system in Sta. Clara Elementary School in Daliao, Toril, Davao City, consisting of elementary school teachers.

The paradigm also considers the fast implementation of Republic Act 10533 and the readiness of the entire public educational system as a precipitating innovation that will require massive changes in the structures and processes of the department of education beginning from lesson planning to teacher evaluation and promotion system. This is not to mention the complementary changes in curriculum and support services which logically require submission of documents and reports inputs to policy making and implementation of the K-12 Program. The factors include, among others, the perception of workplace injustice, professional jealousy, perceived threat to political interest e.g. promotion, obstruction of goal achievement arising out of micro political behavior. The absence of provision of rewards and incentives; and the managerial factors which revolve around management style of leadership and their regard to academic freedom and work autonomy, honesty and fair play or lack of it, are contributory to workplace bullying, thus, the paradigm.

Answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' experiences in work bullying in terms of:
  - 1.1 injustice
  - 1.2 destructive behavior
  - 1.3 obstruction to work target
  - 1.4 obstruction to academic freedom
2. What are the suggestions of teachers regarding workplace bullying?

## **II. Methodology**

The study applied the quantitative-qualitative research designs. Qualitative because it tried to describe the existing condition in the workplace. A qualitative design is best suited to the study because it attempts to describe and explain "what is" and "why" of the existing subject of inquiry. The results of the survey were reinforced by tabular results, interview and observation in the workplace.

The respondents to this study are public elementary school teachers. They are employed by the government in the level of educational system commonly referred to as basic educational system. They are working in public schools situated in Daliao, Toril, Davao City, Philippines. A total of 40 public school teachers cooperated in the survey.

By using questionnaire survey as the tool to gather data, the study measured four variables to describe existence of behaviors antecedent to workplace bullying. The questionnaire consists of three major parts, to wit: the first part consists of the personal information of the respondents. The second part aims at looking into the presence of workplace bullying in the eyes (lens) of the respondents, namely; a) injustice, b) destructive behaviors c) obstruction to goal work achievement and d) obstruction to academic freedom. The last part of the questionnaire rates the suggestions of teachers to minimize workplace bullying. Through the "lens" of basic education teachers, existence of bullying are assessed. The study is both timely and relevant in view of the government's resolve to implement the K-12 Program (Republic Act No.10533, 2013) wherein structures and processes of basic education shall undergo changes and challenges.

In answering each specific research question, an appropriate statistical tool will be employed using Mean, Standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient. The mean and standard deviation was used to determine the presence of bullying in terms of injustice, destructive behavior, obstruction to work achievement, and obstruction to academic freedom. Pearson Correlation Coefficient suits the study to find the relationship between teachers' information and

the presence of work bullying in the workplace. The researcher constructed a five-value Likert scale to interpret the data collected. Thematic analysis was used in the qualitative aspect of the study.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

There is a weak correlation between the respondents' personal attributes and descriptors of workplace bullying. Other than on provision of support system to accomplish task, the personal attributes of respondents and workplace bullying descriptors shows weak correlation. In general, workplace bullying is not rampant in the respondent's respective workplaces. But is not completely free from behaviors of workplace bullying. The presence of injustice as a factor antecedent to workplace bullying is perceived by the respondents as present. However, such presence is more of an influence of organizational culture rather than of bullying environment. The other three factors in bullying name: prevalence of destructive behavior; obstruction to achieve work target and autonomy at workplace are perceived to be not prevalent in the organization. Majority of the respondents considered that formal organizational structure to prevent workplace bullying is not in placed. Majority claimed that they have not experienced attending a school sponsored training and seminar on workplace bullying.

The study showed that among the factors of workplace bullying, it is injustice that appears to be rampant in the eyes of the respondents. But the result is very important for both analytical and practical purposes. If there is injustice, especially in the area of promotion, there is a greater tendency that other factors of workplace bullying may set in. Employee demoralization arising from promotion or unequal access to opportunity to get promoted may breed other factors leading to workplace bullying. Though the setting of the study is a different culture where cooperation and organizational harmony precede even implementation of policies, mobility of workforce applicants from the city and urban centers may infuse different cultural orientation. Graduates from different universities or colleges in the city centers may bring with them western values at work using merit and fitness as basis for promotion. The infusion of such value system may create demoralization and eventually workplace bullying. Under the Philippine legal system, bullying applies only to basic education students in school. The government is strict in its implementation. However, absurdity sets in when the basic education teachers who are in-charge of implementing the law on bullying are themselves bullied by their co-workers or supervisor. Therefore, it is about time for the Congress of the Philippines to legislate and pass upon law on bullying that can be applied in the workplace and must govern teachers not only students.

### *Analysis*

Bullied educators are typically smart, hardworking, honest, creative, and successful professionals who are near the retirement age. However, the bullying is not really about them. The bullying is about the climate that they work in.

Based on the findings, all of the participants were in professional climates that found value in the turnover of teachers. The school districts that employed the participants used in the sample seemed to want to hire younger and lower salaried professionals. The participants used in the sample had years of experience and a history of good evaluations. Because of their past success, they could not be fired based on ineffective practices. Moreover, the participants in the sample were near retirement age, but did not want to retire yet. These participants were bullied in an attempt to make them leave.

The bullying ranged in behaviors from giving unfair evaluations to pitting learners and other teachers against the educator. However, what was common to all of the bullying practices was the intent to wear down the victim psychologically, enough to get them to leave. Even though the participants found ways to cope, half of them eventually left due to the bullying. This research revealed bleak meanings for those considering long careers in the field of education. According to this research, the current climate in the field of education uses bullying as a way to remove seasoned educators from their jobs.

The findings of this research study can add to the body of research on workplace bullying. However, this study seemed to explore a small facet of a very large phenomenon. Phenomenological research studies focus on the lived experience of a phenomenon in the voice of the participant (Cho & Trent, 2021). Therefore, to understand the experience of workplace bullying, this researcher suggests more qualitative studies.

Future studies should explore the implications of race and diversity with regard to workplace bullying in education. As stated earlier, the researcher had a difficult time gaining a racially diverse sample in the primary group of participants. The majority of participants in this research were Cebuano or in a larger context, Filipino. In the Philippine society, there are some advantages to being white or perceived as white (McIntosh, 1988). Cited in Onorato (2019), multicultural expert Peggy McIntosh (1988) shared that her experience with white privilege was like wearing an invisible backpack that afforded her fairness and equality in a racially unequal society. Oppression is typically not based on race when one has this backpack. Therefore, racial disparities were not assumed by the participants in this study. When the world is viewed through the lens of having advantages, individuals tend to stand up and fight for themselves when treated unfairly (Vasquez, 2022).

On the other hand, IPs, native Filipinos and other members of “visibly racial ethnic minority groups” may feel that they are already subordinate or on the bottom of a caste system (Pope-Davis & Coleman, 2019). Because of this, they may internalize racism and other forms of

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unfair treatment and use other coping mechanisms such as prayer instead of standing up for themselves. In addition, the internalization of racism and other forms of mistreatment may lead to cardiovascular issues such as high blood pressure (Cooper, Thayer, & Waldstein, 2019).

Future studies should also explore why administrators (e.g. principals) bully teachers. Blase and Blase (2019) reported that principals have unique challenges and pressures including long hours with low compensation. In addition to inadequate budgets, school reform, and accountability practices, many principals face anxiety and frustration (Blase & Blase, 2019). Perhaps, some of these administrators are experiencing mistreatment, which is spilling over into their management. Some of the research participants felt that the principals were new and forced to bully. Others felt that the principals were forcing the teachers to retire because they were over 40 and made a high salary. Future studies should gain insight into the stories and experiences of principals from a bullying perspective.

#### IV. Conclusion

The faculty said they were given duties over or below their capacity or some were even given no duty. Regarding the latter, a teacher said that due to the jealousy of the principal, a kind of punishment was given to her; i.e., asking her to teach four classes (more than other instructors) because she was specifically requested by a professor in another department to teach writing to her class due to her superior performance.

Whereas, a teacher said he was asked to do the secretarial work too and teach at the same time, neither of which was within his job description. A teacher said because she resisted accepting an irrelevant duty, she was not given any class to teach and made a substitute instructor. Another teacher, being an English language instructor, refused to teach free English classes to a coordinator at her school as this duty was not within her job description.

Humiliation, Irritation, Sarcasm. A teacher sadly reported that her perpetrator's irritation of her as: "oh, you have come to school! We thought you resigned!" A teacher said her principal approached her with a "sarcastic approach" to despise her efforts for the good works she performed. Another teacher complained that her principal told her off twice by the secretary; the first one because her colleague complained about her to the principal and the second one was like: "She said I gave a high mark to a student. She humiliated me and I got angry and talked back to her." A teacher sadly talked about her principal's behavior: "we had a loss in our family and despite hearing about this, he expressed his sympathy with a smile on his face as if he was mocking. This wore me down a lot". A teacher reported the teacher trainer's personal comments attacking her and how she felt humiliated: Months later I had started working at the university, she said: "We accepted you from the backup position; first, we liked you and then we got disappointed". Such kinds of personal opinions tired me a lot here. When I went to the department head to talk about this, she was already informed about it and I was told off in a very aggressive tone.

Gossips, Rumor. A teacher said “there was discrimination and people were spreading gossip”. A teacher said: Gossip culture was so widespread at those times; everybody was prejudiced against each other and these were reflected to the department head. ... They warned newly employed faculty as: “be careful with X, don’t talk to him/her!”. They made this against me a lot. They talked behind me as: “she makes groups, be careful!” or “she does her job very well ‘but’ ...; she reads a lot ‘but’ she is impulsive!” I was laughing at them because these things did not serve anything. I made very good relationships with people and they saw this. Ignoring and Isolating

A teacher said that her ideas had been ignored by the director and the power group in the meetings for the last four years whereas the same ideas raised later on by the power-group members were always appreciated. She also said due to these unfair treatments and not being given a class to teach, she isolated herself from others by spending the whole semester in the library reading academic magazines. A teacher also complained about being ignored: “She pretended not to see me in meetings while she talked to everybody, and then she came to me and said ‘Oh were you here?’

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