EXPLORING AND INVESTIGATING WORKPLACE BULLYING IN THE NIGERIAN WORKPLACES

**ADEWUMI, OLUWAKEMI & DANESI, ROSEMARY**
Department of Employment Relations & Human Resource Management
Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos
**oaadewumi@unilag.edu.ng; rdanesi@unilag.edu.ng**

### *Abstract*

*The need to examine workplace bullying in Nigeria has become paramount, given the various reports on some of the negative consequences of workplace bullying on the victims and the organisation at large. With the increase in awareness on the negative effects of workplace bullying on the health of workers, this research aims at investigating and exploring the concept, within the general practices and interactions amongst employees in the workplace. Data was randomly collected across various organisations, sectors and locations within the Nigerian work setting. The study examined different types of workplace bullying experiences among Nigerian workers using a single validated instrument, the Negative Acts Questionnaire, Revised (NAQ-R) developed by Einarsen and Cooper (2001), and measuring the effects of the 23 Negative behavioursitemised on the respondents. A factor analysis was conducted using the 23 Negative Behaviours employees are likely to be exposed to and the effects of such behaviours on the respondents. The results were variously re-labelled into Individual Bullying, On the Job/Job Related Bullying, Ostracism, and victimization. It was observed that employees experienced diverse forms of bullying and the phenomenon has become part of the culture in most of the organisations. Also, majority of the respondents reported that workplace bullying affected them negatively. The paper concludes that there is widespread bullying in most organisations which adversely affects their workers, suggesting that awareness should be created concerning this negative behaviour.*

***Keywords:*** *Workplace bullying, Negative Effects, Organisation, Culture, Power Relations, Policies.*

## 1.    Introduction

Research on workplace bullying has been widely recognised by numerous scholars. Evidences in internationally prominent journals and textbooks have promoted theoretical and empirical debates from diverse parts of the world such as Australia (Sheehan 1999), Wales (Lewis, 2002), Europe (Rayner, 2000; McCarthy & Rylance 2001), America (Einarsen & Matthiesen 1999). Public Media have also increased their quest on shedding more light into this anti-social problem. Reports like these have contributed in making the concept

more popular and the evidence of such is the continuous presence of the concept in the academic literature in sciences, social sciences, law and even business. Given the universal awareness and the extensive research on workplace bullying across several continents, it is surprising that African researchers are still behind and has just started to make their marks on this phenomenon see (Adewumi and Danesi, 2017) that has gathered and is still gathering more attention. Hence, Nigerian employers, unions and employees are ignoring the fact that workplace bullying is prevailing in their organisations and in their everyday interactions. The lack of empirical research in Nigeria has limited this study to not being able to determine whether workplace bullying is characterised by most workplaces in Nigeria, hence it will be difficult to draw tangible comparison about bullying effects between Nigeria and other African countries. Since this research is first of its kind in the Nigerian setting, it will be exploratory and investigative in nature by examining the incidence of workplace bullying and its impacts on employees in workplaces in Nigeria. Nigeria is deeply steeped in the traditional culture and is characterised by 'respect for elders and authority, followed by the dominant male gender role in the society.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the acceptability of workplace bullying in Nigeria could be regarded as a function of the cultural and social orientation, which is the main reason why this research is investigative in Nature. The notion of workplace bullying was promoted in 1984 by Leymann which led to a small scientific report published in early 1984 at The National Board of Occupational Safety and Health in Stockholm, Sweden. This early research suggests the interest of the Scandinavian countries on the subject, and their continuous lead in the amount of research emanating from the scandanavians is appraisable. As Hoel (1997) suggests, the interest in workplace bullying in Scandinavia is a reflection of their early recognition of problem. Based on the first research, Leymann interpreted mobbing as a social interaction in which one individual (seldom one) is attacked by another one or more individuals, occurring at least once a week for at least six months, thereby causing psychological, psychosomatic and social misery on the attacked and other witnesses around (Leymann 1996).This "bullying or mobbing" as introduced by Leymann (1996) refers to the severe form of harassing people in organisations. Thus, the two parties involved in the bullying relationship is an indication that more focus should be on the underlying causes that constitute them -that is, their personalities and their characteristics. These two factors according to Einarsen (2000) might help to elucidate why some individuals are more endangered to such behaviours or why some are likely to be the perpetrators. Some demographic factors such as gender has been widely debated (Salin 2014), while others emphasized the less represented group in the organisation, for instance ethnic minority (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Hoel& Cooper, 2003).  Such arguments will

continue to buttress the fact that social categorization or identification plays a vital role in increasing the likelihood of someone being a bully or even the victim. In order to have a full understanding of this phenomenon, a thorough analysis and critical literature review would be done.

**Research Aims and Objectives**
This paper investigates the extent and nature of workplace bullying, and effects on the workers in Nigeria. This was done by using the Negative Attitude Questionnaires-Revised (NAQ-R).By comparing the types and forms of bullying behaviours that employees have been exposed to in the workplace.

## 2.    Literature Review: Workplace Bullying Explored

Within most academic construct, there is no generic meaning of the concept. Workplace bullying according to Salin (2014) is defined as a term used tolabel negative behaviours and aggressive relations between organisational members. The first definition was given by Leymann (1996), who defined workplace bullying as the severe harassing of people in the organisation, which can result to numerous harmful interpersonal relationships and damaging physical and non-physical wellbeing. A more elaborated definition was given by Glendinning (2001), describing bullying as a recurring, less constructive behaviour of a person by another in the workplace, which might be deliberated as irrational and incongruous. Other researchers argue that for it to be termed as bullying, it should have transpired for a minimum of six months. Notelaers, Einarsen, De Witte, & Vermunt (2006) and Salin (2003) opined that such behaviors normally start as minor negative acts, which over time can accumulate into systematic maltreatment that is very upsetting and devastating.

Although various definitions have been given by different authors, researchers and contributors on the subject, these definitions are meant to guide our thinking and that is why Sheehan, Barker and Charlotte (1999) argued that the strongest agreement should be premised on the notion that, it is a negative behaviour, whose consequences are negative. That is, bullying consists of behaviours that are observed by the targets in a negative fashion (Salin, 2003). Scholars such as Hoel and Copper (2001), Vartis (2002) and Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (2003) are of the opinion that it should be a consistent and recurrently over time instead of a single instance. Finally, there is an agreement on power relations in the form of power imbalance. This argument, according to Salin (2003), is founded on the fact that people bullied in most circumstances are not able to protect themselves base on power allocation or position of authority. Therefore, this disparity of power relationship indicates that one of the parties is defenceless. For instance, it is perceived that a woman in a male dominated organisation will be more vulnerable and vice-versa.

However, some of the definitions of workplace bullying, according to Hoel (2006), have left too much room for subjective interpretations that is based on the argument that bullying itself is a subjective term requiring interaction between parties for it to occur. Hence, revealing the extent to which the literature on workplace bullying is large and extensive, with researchers across the developed world reporting the concerns of bullying to be having negative consequences within their workplaces.  In Nigeria, the limited understandings of the concept and the lack of appropriate measures of dealing with the problem remains a challenge (Adewumi, Sheehan, and Lewis 2006). For the purpose of this research and drawing on the aforementioned definitional understandings, workplace bullying is defined following the views of Adewumi, Sheehan, and Lewis (2006),as a practice of anti-social activities(s) in the workplace which arises as a result of imbalanced power relations that can have negative effects on the recipient(s), witnesses, as well as the overall organisation.

## Causes and Effects of Workplace Bullying

Quite a lot of arguments have been advanced on the roots and the effects of workplace bullying. For some authors, workplace bullying is as a consequence of the weak social climate in the workplace, which is usually characterised by conflicts (Agervold,2009), while others argue that there are other factors labelled as organisational antecedents of bullying such as stress in the workplace and unproductive conflict resolution mechanism (Baillien & De Witte, 2009), poorleadership style, poor management of organisational change, toxic organisational climate (Sheehan, 2006), culture (Vartia, 2003) and job scheme are all constituents that can improve the bullying tendency in the workplace (Baillien, Bollen, Euwema & De Witte, 2014). Research evidence exposed that workplace bullying has undesirable and huge consequences on the organisation (Lewis, 2006; Salin, Cowan, Adewumi, Apospori, Bochantin, D'Cruz, Djurkovic, Durniat, Escartín, Guo, IdillIşik, Koeszegi, McCormack, Inés Monserrat, Olivas-Luján&Zedlacher (2018).) and the individual (Rodriguez-Mun~ oz, Baillien, De Witte, Moreno-Jime´nez, & Pastor, 2009). For individuals, it can affect both their psychological or physical well-being (Sheehan, 2006). This is one of the most disturbing effects of bullying on victims.  Such behaviours could lead to counterproductive behaviours in workplace such as lack of commitment, absenteeism and in some cases, sabotage (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2004). Sabotage can be in the form of waste, withholding vital information that can affect the company, theft and so on (Glendinning 2001). Thus, workplace bullying can be costly for the organisation as well. Such cost can, according to Salin et al. (2018) manifest in absenteeism, turnover intention, decline in productivity and litigations, among others (Hoel, Einarsen & Cooper, 2003). Given all these arguments, this study aims at investigating the

diverse forms of bullying behaviours employees are exposed to and the impacts of such behaviors on employees.

## 3.    Research Method

This study utilised quantitative research technique. The Negative Acts Questionnaire –Revised Edition developed by Einarsen (2000) was adapted. The questionnaire is structured and encompasses questions on causes of bullying and impacts on employees. A blend of both online surveys and hard copies of questionnaires were used to gather data from respondents. The study used survey monkey which is less cumbersome, because it enables respondents to provide quicker responses, while the hard copies offer wider coverage, particularly in companies where the workforce had limited access to internet. The questionnaires were distributed across diverse companies from both the public and private sectors.  For easy analysis and interpretation of the result, a sample of six hundred and fifty (650) respondents was chosen from the population using the simple random sampling technique. Given the sensitive nature of this study, issues of confidentialities and anonymity were addressed in accordance with the required ethical standards for research of this nature.

## 4.    Results

### Demographic Analysis

Simple descriptive analysis of the data is illustrated in the Table 1 below. Results of the demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that346 (53.2%) are male while 304 (46.8%) are female. The ages of respondents under 25 years accounted for 57 (8.8%), 503 (77.4%) represent those between the ages of 25-39 years, 63 (9.7%) represent those between the ages of 40-49 years, 25 (3.8%) represent those between the ages of 50-59 years, while 2 (0.3%) represent those that are 60 years and over. It shows that the majority of our respondents are male, between ages 25 and 39.  In terms of disability, 10 (1.5%) are disabled, while remaining 640(98.5%0 reported not be disabled. For religion, 531(81.7%) are Christians, 109(16.8%) Muslims; 2 (0.3%) Traditionalists and 8 (1.2%) reported to be practicing other religions. Thus, the majority of the respondents are Christians. For ethnicity, 20 (3.1%) are Hausas, 374(57.5%) are Yorubas, 148(22.8%) are Ibos, while the remaining 108(16.6%) represent other tribes. Hence, there are more Yoruba respondents which could result because the survey was carried out in Lagos which is dominated more by that ethnic group. For the length of service in their respective organisations, 110(16.9%) indicated to have spent below 1 year in service, 302 (46.5%) have spent between 1-5 years, 201(30.9%) have spent between 6-15 years, 19 (2.9%) have spent between 16-20 years and 18 (2.8%) spent between 21-25 years. This shows that majority of the respondents (63.4%) do not have much experience and have only spent less than 6 years in service.

In terms of respondents' levels, 268 (41.2%) are in the junior cadre of their various organisations, 284 (43.7%) are in senior level, while 98 (15.1%) are in the senior management level. Since majority are represented at both the junior and middle levels, such information can be interpreted as employees who are lower in position are most likely to be bullied the more. For condition of employment, 434 (66.8%) are permanent employees, 101 (43.7%) are temporary workers and 115 (17.7%) are contract staff in their respective occupations. Thus, majority of the respondents are engaged on permanent basis. While in occupational classification, 69 (10.6%) are Oil and Gas workers, 176 (27.1%) work in the Financial Service, 90 (13.8%) work in the Education sector, 63 (9.7%) work in Consulting, 37 (5.7%) work in the Tourism and Hospitality sector, 50 (7.7%) work in Building and Construction, 39 (6.0%) are in Health Services, 10 (1.5%) work in the Agricultural sector, 77 (11.8%) work in Telecommunication sector, while 39 (6.0%) work in other sectors. This data shows a fair representation of respondents across different sectors. Finally, for the sectoral classification, 132 (20.3%) work in the Public sector, while the remaining 518 (79.7%) are in the private sector. This shows that majority of the respondents work for private organisations.

### *Analysis of the Effects of Negative Behaviours*

Table 2 below presents the analysis of the effects of Negative Behaviours on the respondents. Considering the effects of bullying on employees' physical health and wellbeing, 237 (36.5%) reported that it affected them negatively, 137 (21.0%) indicated positive effects, while the remaining 276 (42.5%) reported no effect. For effects on employees' mental health and wellbeing, 257 (39.5%) reported that workplace bullying affected them negatively, 155 (23.9%) positively, while 238 (36.6%) of the respondents reported no effect. For their confidence and self-esteem, 244 (37.6%) revealed that they were negatively affected, 199 (30.6%) reported positive effects, while 207 (31.8%) of the respondents said it had no effect on them. As regards work attendance, 257 (39.5%) reported that it affected them negatively, 152 (23.4%) reported positive effects, while 241 (37.1%) said it had no effect on work attendance. For efficiency at work, 236 (36.3%) reported that they were negatively affected, 217 (33.3) were positively affected, while 197 (30.3%) reported no effect. For commitment to the organisation, 249 (38.3%) reported it having negative effects, 220 (33.8%) reported it having positive effects, while 181 (27.8%) reported bullying as having no effect. Considering relationship with others at work, 206 (31.7%) are negatively affected, 243 (37.4%) reported positive effects, while 201 (30.9%) reported no effect. For relationship with their friends and family as a result of bullying experiences at work, 197 (30.3%) indicated that they were negatively affected, 197 (30.3%) reported positive effects, while 256 (39.4%) reported no effect.

Considering effects of bullying on financial circumstances, 224 (34.5%) reported that they were negatively affected, 185 (28.4%) stated positive

outcomes, while 241 (37.1%) reported that they were not affected. For influence of bullying on careers, 227 (34.9%) reported negative effects, 213 (32.8%) reported positive effect, while 210 (32.3%) reported no effect. For the effects of bullying on respondents' overall life, 203 (31.2%) reported bullying as having negative effects, 222 (34.1%) reported positive effects, while 225 (34.6%) revealed no effect. As regards to the effects of bullying on respondents' families, 196 (30.1%) stated that they were negatively affected, 190 (29.3%) positive, while 264 (40.6%) reported no effect. Summarily, for items1,8, 9 and 12 in the Table 2 below, it shows that more respondents reported no effects of bullying experiences, but we have more respondents that are affected negatively than positively except for item 11 where more respondents unpredictably reported that negative behaviours affected them more positively than negative on their overall lives. This 'no effect' response could be seen as a result of the coping and surviving mechanisms adopted by the employees, since bullying practices has become the norm and common way of behaviour within Nigerian the society. While responses to items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 seem to be more real, as such negative behaviours would expectedly cause negative effects on another person.

### *Analysis of the Negative Acts Behaviours*

Factor analysis was run on the 23 identified behaviours classified as bullying in nature. A Kaiser_Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling was carried out to check the pattern of correlation. The Table 3 below shows a value of 0.918 which falls within the range of 'superb', revealing that the factor analysis carried is suitable for these data (Field, 2005). Also, Bartlett's test of sphericity gives a degree of significance of $p<0.001$, indicating its suitability for testing the data. The Scree Plot below (See Figure 1) depicts the percentage of variance accounted for by the factors, which collapse after the fifth component; hence five components are retained for the analysis. The loading of negative behaviours in presented in the Table 3 below. The variables loaded into five components. The eigenvalues connected with each linear component (factor) before extraction identified that *factor 1* explains 38.6 per cent of the variance, *factor 2* explains 7.4 per cent of the variance, factor 3 explains 5.5 per cent of the variance, factor 4 explains 5.2 per cent of the variance, and factor 5 explains 4.5 per cent of the variance. The five factors add up to explain 61.2 per cent cumulatively, which is significant for this study. The extraction was set on five factors.

The first factor is the highest (38.6 per cent) is expected of any factor analysis (Field, 2005). The rotated sum of square loading optimizes the outcome of the factor structures; that is, the significance of each of the five factors is balanced. The rotated *factor 1* accounts for 17.1 per cent total variance, *factor 2* accounts for 14.8 per cent of the total variance, *factor 3* accounts for 12.5 per cent of the total variance, *factor 4* accounts for 8.4 per cent of the total

variance, and *factor 5* accounts for 8.4 per cent of the total variance. The rotated component matrix in Table 3 below shows all loading to be greater than 0.3.All the values in Table 3 are greater than 0.3, which suggests that all the factors incorporated are very vital and they all contribute fundamentally to the factors. The content of questions that loaded into one factor result to the identification of common themes, are re-labeled. Based on the loading extraction, *Factor 1*, highlights four issues, namely:

1.    *Having your opinions and views ignored (0.760)*
2.    *Persistent criticism of your work and effort (0.694)*
3.    *Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger or rage (0.688)*
4.    *Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you are approached (0.685)*
5.

All the four themes seem to connect to cynical and personal deeds common among Nigerians. Before these loadings were labeled, the other factors issues that fell under *Factor 1*are as follows: 'recurrent reminders of your mistakes or faults', 'hints or signals from others that you should resign your job', 'intimidations of violence or physical cruelty, threatening behaviour such as finger-pointing' and 'assault of personal space'. Based on these outcomes, this factor was labeled **Individual Bullying.**

On the second factor, the four concerns that are loaded highly on *Factor 2* are as follow:

*Having key areas of responsibilities detached or substituted with unpleasant tasks (0.450)*
*Being the subject of extreme teasing and mockery(0.428)*
*Being ordered to work below your degree of competence (0.498)*
*Being disgraced or mocked in connection to your work (0.422)*

These issues appear to link directly to the Nigerian work circumstances, and it can be view as a behaviours that are out of the control of some individuals. Some other concern's under Factor 2 that were highly connected are: 'Having major areas of tasks detached or substituted with unpleasant duties', 'being ordered to work below your degree of ability', 'pressure not to claim something which by right you are eligible to'. This factor was therefore labeled **On-the-job/Job-related Bullying.**

Looking at *Factor 3*, the concerns with the maximum values or loading are as follows:

1.    *Intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space (0.383)*
2.    *Being exposed to an unmanageable workload (0.392)*

3.    *Having insulting or offensive statement made about your person, your attitudes or your personal life (0.356)*

All the aforementioned issues appear to focus on individual respondent at work. Other variable that fell under *Factor 3* is: 'Being snubbed or facing a intimidating reaction when you are approached and being yelled at or being the target of unprompted anger (or rage)'. On the basis of the above results, this factor was characterized **Directed Bullying.**

In *Factor 4*, the issues with the highest values or loading are:
1.    *Being ignored and excepted from activities (0.422)*
2.    *Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with (0.375)*
3.    *Being given responsibilities with awkward or difficult targets or time limit(0.381)*

All the aforementioned issues of bullying are suggestive of staff segregation or discernment in the workplace. Therefore, this factor was labeled **Ostracism.**

Finally, *Factor 5* loaded on three items; namely:
1.    *Being exposed to unsuitable resources in the workplace (0.423)*
2.    *Having accusations made against you (0.318)*
3.    *Dissemination of gossip and rumours about me (0.542)*

All these issues of bullying are directed toward harassment in the workplace. Consequently, this factor was labeled **Victimization.**

## 5.    Discussion of Findings

The major aim of this paper was to examine the extent and nature of workplace bullying and effects on the workers in Nigeria. Hence, five summarised and relabeled forms of behaviours that could be seen to institute workplace bullying are described in this study.  They are 'Individual bullying', 'On the Job/Job Related Bullying', 'Directed Bullying', 'Ostracism', and 'Victimization'. For Individual Bullying, this form of bullying is individualised and targeted at a person and usually affects the victim. It is not the type meted to a group of employees. This classification is similar to that put forward by Adewumi et al. (2006) and Fajana, Owoyemi, Shadare, Elegbede and Gbajumo-Sheriff (2011). In their pioneer study on gender and workplace bullying in Nigeria, Fajana et al. (2011) looked at differences in bullying experienced as personal bullying, which are behaviours targeted at individuals. Such classification is based on the composition of variables that were loaded into a factor. This finding therefore suggests that some behaviours are targeted at individuals as a result of the characteristic of the victim. Studies such as Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, and Alberts (2007) offered various explanations such as personality types, demographic characteristics

such as gender (Adewumi and Danesi 2017) and powerlessness as some of the factors that can put an individual at a risk of being bullied, which is a typical characteristic of many organisations in Nigerians, following the outcomes in this study.

For the 'Job related bullying', this relates to the kind of workplace bullying that are connected to employees' job responsibilities. Here, employees have very little or no control regarding the circumstances relating to their jobs. For instance employees' inputs mean little or nothing to their managers, responsibilities assigned below the capabilities or competence levels among other instances. This form of bullying is caused by the management, organisation or superior officers' decision concerning junior employees' job responsibilities. The nature of work or the pressure of work and the need to have or maintain a competitive advantage has prompted some organisations to start incorporating some hard elements into the management of their employees in the workplace. Hence, this deficient approach of managing people would create fertile ground for bullying to grow. Through this study, there will now be evidences for managers to know how to handle the pressure of work and be aware that promoting or behaving in an unacceptable manner should attract sanctions. This is not surprising, because previous studies on bullying have identified psycho-social factors as constituting one of the many reasons that bullying goes on (Agervold, 2009). Thus, the organisation indeed has a very large role to play in ensuring that the pressure of work, does not lead to a situation whereby negative behaviours will start to grow in the workplace. This result is supported by other empirical findings, that the work environment and activities are factors that can create avenues for bullying to be perpetrated in the organisation (Baillien et al., 2009). In other words, the form of workplace bullying could emanate from numerous issues such as the responsibilities, and positions occupied in the workplace (Hoel & Cooper, 2000).

For 'Directed Bullying', behaviours that formed this factor are more directed at the victim. It is often confrontational, straight or face-to-face to the employee(s) involved. It is harsh and could result to physical confrontation between the bully and the bullied. Sometimes, the bullied knows who tries to bully him or her and can meet him or her to resolve the issue(s), but the ability for the recipient of direct bullying to confront the bully is a factor of their personality type and sometimes their characteristics, such as gender, ethnic background, level in the organization and employment status – whether contractual or full employment. 'Ostracism', on the other hand, are behaviours targeted at individuals or groups which can be qualified as discriminatory in nature. These behaviours are intended to separate or single out employee(s). Another name for such behavior is "social exclusion", representing that form of workplace bullying that is meant to intentionally torture the recipient

mentally and psychologically. For instance, when an employee does not belong to a particular dominant group/clique/caucus, he/she could be denied major opportunities or have resources and/or information withheld from him/her, which might affect their resultant performances on and off the job. Scholars, such as Leymann (1996) and Salin (2006) stated that social exclusion to be due to the demographic composition of the organisation and being a minority group could constitute vulnerability (Lewis & Gunn, 2006). So those who do not belong to the dominant group/clique/caucus and/or ostracized, are usually singled out and most likely exposed to such bullying behaviors. 'Victimization' is another type of bullying reported and it is another name for "harassment". It has to do with unfair treatment of certain employees while working for an organization. It is also harsh in nature as it intends to put some fear in the victim and forcefully persuade them to be loyal or oppress them to be able to achieve the bully's goals. It is a behavior that could be subjective in nature and in most cases, can only be expressed by the recipient.  The variables that are loaded into this factor indicate that people's perception of what constitute negative behaviors can be interpreted in various ways, while individual perception remains the basis for interpretation of their social representation (Vartia, 2001).

On the effects of these negative behaviours on employees, this study reveals several patterns to the perceptions on what constitute bullying. Majority of the respondents reported that bullying has affected them negatively. And such reports indicate that it could be very severe for some of the respondents, especially if it affects their physical and mental health (Rodriguez-Munoz, Baillen, De Witte, Moreno-Jemenez, and Pastor, (2009). The finding of this study also corroborated the view expressed by Sheehan (2006) that remarked that bullying can result to numerous health complications that can impact employee physical and psychological well-being. Findings of this study are similar to the position advocated by researchers such Baillien, et al. (2014) that workplace bullying can sometimes be expensive, especially in terms of absenteeism due to stress related illness, and cost of treating the victims or recruiting new employee (Hoel & Cooper, 2000). Thus, workplace bullying can be costly for the organization (Salin et al., 2018) and as well as the employees, especially in situations when the majority of the respondents reported that it affected attendance at work, commitment to the organisation, as well as their relationships at work and home fronts. Such costs according to Salin (2006) can manifest in diverse forms such absenteeism, turnover intention, decline in productivity, reputational damage to the company, and litigation (Hoel, Einarsen & Cooper, 2003). Given these results, the proposition that employees experience different forms of bullying has been established and the devastating impacts of the phenomenon on the target is mostly negative and destructive.

## 6.    Conclusions

This study concluded that bullying is still a relatively new concept in the Nigerian literature, even though evidences presented shows that bullying practices are going on unabated, especially when it has become the prevailing culture among most Nigerian workplaces. Thus, making bullying account for the reason why it is perceived as a normal way of doing things and interacting in the organisation. The categorization of the 23 negative behaviors into 5 factors would assist in developing the right solution to the problem. For the individual bullying, Victimisation and Ostracism, interventions targeted at people will be more appropriate. For instance, counseling, training and seeking psychological help might reduce the severity of such behaviours on the recipient/bullied. As for those that are organisational or work related, management of organisations can put different initiatives in place that can emphasise their zero tolerance to bullying behaviours. Also policies can be developed that will ensure that the perpetrators can be sanctioned as appropriately as possible. Even though in some situations, bullies try to justify their actions by saying that they are just doing their jobs and due to the pressure of work in their respective organisations, they need to exercise some form of control. Situations like this might require the management of organisations to develop different types of training to suit different purposes. For instance, the bullies might benefit from training on emotional intelligence, sensitivity training or even stress management. The victims on the other hand can also benefit from assertive training and communication in the workplace. Hence, the intervention against such behaviours should be targeted at everybody in the organisation, and employees should be more knowledgeable about the destructive consequences of bullying on the target and the overall organisation. Another way forward that involves bringing workplace bullying issues to everybody's awareness may assist to create a constant consciousness about this social phenomenon.

## 7.    Limitations

Although the present study contributed immensely to literature on bullying and management practices in Nigeria, it has some inherent limitations. First, the study is exploratory in nature; therefore, samples were randomly drawn across various companies which might not be a perfect illustration of other institutions or sectoral cluster. Also, the research did not focus on a specific firm, thus, the findings might not be valid to some specific workplaces. Lastly, interventions or help might be difficult to reach individual that have been a target of bullying behaviours, since this study is founded on the norm of confidentiality and anonymity. This also means that any proposed intervention might not serve specific individual purposes as required for specific employee and organisational needs. Given these limitations, this study to a large extent has broaden our knowledge and understanding on some of the negative behaviours that constitute what can be termed as workplace bullying and

negative effects of such behaviours on the recipients, bullies and as well as the organisation.

## *References*

Adewumi, O., and Danesi, R. (2017) Gender: A Vulnerability Factor or Not? Exploring and Investigating Workplace Bullying in Nigeria. Journal of Economics, Business and     Management, (10), 324-330

Adewumi, O., Sheehan, S., and Lewis, D. (2006)*Workplace Bullying in an Emergency Service Organisation in the UK. An Outcome of the Pressure of Work*. A Paper Presented at the 6[th]International Conference on Workplace Bullying Shatring Our Knowledge, Montreal, Canada.

Agervold, M. (2009). The significance of organizational factors for the incidence of bullying. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 50*, 267–276.

Baillien, E., & De Witte, H. (2009). Why organizational change is related to workplace bullying: Role conflict and job insecurity as mediators. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 30, 348-371.

Baillien, E., Bollen, K., Euwema, M., & De Witte, H. (2014). Conflicts and conflict management styles as precursors of workplace bullying: a two-wave longitudinal study. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 23* (4), 511-524.

Djurkovic, N., McCormack, D. & Casimir, G. (2004). The Physical and Psychological Effects of Workplace Bullying on Intention to Leave: A Test of the Psychosomatic and Disability Hypotheses. *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior*, 7: 469-497.

Einarsen, S. & Matthiesen, S. (1999). Cited in Einarsen, S. (2000). *The effects of bullying on the individual*. Paper presented to the Academy of Management, Toronto.

Einarsen, S. (2000). Harassment and bullying at work: A review of the Scandinavian approach. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 5*, 379-401.

Einarsen, S. & Skogstad, A. (1996). Bullying at work: Epidemiological findings in public and private organizations. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8, 185-201.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C. L. (2003). The concept of bullying at work: The European tradition. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: International perspectives in research and practice (pp. 3–30)*. London: Taylor & Francis

Fajana, S., Owoyemi, O., Shadare, S., Elegbede, T., &Gbajumo-Sheriff, M. (2011). Gender differences: An antecedent for workplace bullying and

harassment in Nigeria Workplaces. *European Journal of Social Science, 21*(3), 448-455.

Field, A. (2005). *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS*, 2nd Edition. London, Sage.

Glendinning, P. (2001). Workplace Bulling: Curing the Cancer of the American Workplace. *Public Personnel Management, 3* (3) 269-278

Hoel, H. (1997). Bullying at Work: A Scandinavian perspective, *Institution of Occupational Safety and Health Journal, 1*, 51-9.

Hoel, H. (2006). *The Limits of Regulations: assessing the effectiveness of the swedish regulations against workplace bullying*. Paper Presented at the Fifth International Conference on Workplace Bullying. Workplace Bullying - The Way Forward.

Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. (2001). Origins of bullying: Theoretical frameworks for explaining workplace bullying. In N. Tyehrani (Ed.), *Building a culture of respect: managing bullying at work (3-19)*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. (2003). Organizational effects of bullying: Bullying and emotional abuse at work place, pp145-186. In, Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C.L. (eds.), *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: International Perspectives in Research and Practice*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. L. (2000). Destructive conflict and bullying at work. Manchester: Samnani, A.-K. (2013). The early stages of workplace bullying and how it becomes prolonged: The role of culture in predicting target responses. *Journal of Business Ethics, 113*, 119–132. Manchester School of Management, UMIST.

Hoel, H., Einarsen, S. & Cooper, C. L. (2003). Organizational Effects of Bullying, in S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, and C.L. Cooper (eds.). *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace*. Taylor and Francis, London, UK, 145-161.

Lewis, D. & Gunn, R. (2006). Workplace Bullying in the Public Sector: Understanding the Racial Dimension*, Public Administration, 85* (3), 641-665.

Lewis, D. (2002). *The Social Construction of Workplace Bullying – A Sociological Study with Special Reference to Further and Higher Education*. Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Wales (Cardiff), School of Social Sciences and Education.

Lewis, M. A. (2006). Nurse bullying: organizational considerations in the maintenance and perpetration of health care bullying cultures. *Journal of Nursing Management, 14*, 52-58.

Leymann, H. (1996). The content and development at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 5* (2), 165-184.

Lutgen-Sandvik, P. Tracy, S. J. & Alberts, J. K. (2007). Burned by bullying in the American workplace: Prevalence, perception, degree and impact. *Journal of Management Studies, 44,* 837-862.

McCarthy, P. & Rylance, J. (2001). The bullying challenge. In P. McCarthy, R. Rylance, R. Bennett, & H. Zimmerman (Eds.). *Bullying: From backyard to boardroom (xi)*. Sydney: Federation Press.

Notelaers, G., Einarsen, S., De Witte, H. & Vermunt, J. K. (2006). Measuring exposure to bullying at work: The validity and advantages of the latent class cluster approach. *Work & Stress*, 20, 288-301.

Rayner, C. (2000). Building a business case for tackling bullying in the workplace: beyond a cost-benefit approach', Sheehan, M., Ramsay, S., and Patrick, J. (Eds), *Transcending Boundaries: Integrating People, Processes and Systems.* Proceedings of the 2000 Conference, Brisbane, Queensland, September, 26-31.

Rodriguez-Munoz, A., Baillien, E., De Witte, H., Moreno-Jimenez, B., & Pastor, J. C. (2009). Cross-lagged relationships between workplace bullying, job satisfaction, and engagement: Two longitudinal studies. *Work &*Stress, 23, 225-243.

Salin, D., Cowan, R., Adewumi, O., Apospori, E., Bochantin, J., D'Cruz, P., Djurkovic, N., Durniat, K., Escartín, J., Guo, J.,IdilIşik, I., Koeszegi, S., McCormack, D., Inés Monserrat, S.,  Olivas-Luján, M.&Eva Zedlacher (2018). Prevention of and interventions in workplace bullying: a global study of human resource professionals' reflections on preferred action. *The International Journal of human resource management*, https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1460857

Salin, D. (2006). Se preocupan las organizaciones por el acosopsicológicoen el trabajo? Percepciones de los trabajadoressobre las medidasorganizacionales contra el acosopsicológico [Do companies care about workplace bullying? Employee perceptions of organizational measures against workplace bullying]. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones, 22, 413-431.*

Salin, D. (2003). Bullying and organisational politics in competitive and rapidly changing work environments. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making, 4* (1), 35-46.

Salin, P. (2014). *Money and Micro-economics*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

Sheehan, M and Barker M. & Charlotte, R. (1999). Applying Strategies for Dealing with workplace Bullying. *International Journal of Manpower, 20* (1-2) 50

Sheehan, M. (1999). Workplace bullying: Responding with some emotional intelligence. *Journal of Manpower*, 20, 57-69.

Sheehan, M. (2006). *The Fight at Eureka Stockade: Down with the Tyrant an' Bully*. A paper presented at the Inaugural Professorial Lecture, Glamorgan Business School.

Vartia, M. (2001). Consequences of workplace bullying with respect to the well-being of its targets and the observers of bullying. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health*, 27, 63-69.

Vartia, M. (2002). Gender differences in workplace bullying among prison officers. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 11*, 113-126

Vartia, M. (2003). *Workplace Bullying: A Study on the Work Environment, Well-Being and Health*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Helsinki.

# APPENDIX

**Table 1: An Overview of Respondents**

| S/N | Descriptive | (N=650) | Per cent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **What is your gender?** | | |
| | Male | 346 | 53.2 |
| | Female | 304 | 46.8 |
| 2 | **What is your age?** | | |
| | Under 25 years | 57 | 8.8 |
| | 25-39 years | 503 | 77.4 |
| | 40-49 years | 63 | 9.7 |
| | 50 – 59 years | 25 | 3.8 |
| | 60 years or over | 2 | 0.3 |
| 3 | **Do you consider that you have a disability?** | | |
| | Yes | 10 | 1.5 |
| | No | 640 | 98.5 |
| 4 | **To which religious group do you belong?** | | |
| | Christian | 531 | 81.7 |
| | Muslim | 109 | 16.8 |
| | Traditional | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Others | 8 | 1.2 |
| 5 | **Indicate your ethnic background** | | |
| | Hausa | 20 | 3.1 |
| | Yoruba | 374 | 57.5 |
| | Ibo | 148 | 22.8 |
| | Other ethnic group | 108 | 16.6 |
| 6 | **How long have you been working at your organization?** | | |
| | Under 1 year | 110 | 16.9 |
| | 1-5 years | 302 | 46.5 |
| | 6-15 years | 201 | 30.9 |
| | 16-20 years | 19 | 2.9 |
| | 21-25 years | 18 | 2.8 |
| 7 | **What level are you?** | | |
| | Junior Level | 268 | 41.2 |
| | Middle Management | 284 | 43.7 |
| | Senior Management | 98 | 15.1 |
| 8 | **What is the condition of your employment?** | | |
| | Permanent employment | 434 | 66.8 |
| | Temporary employment | 101 | 15.5 |
| | Contract work | 115 | 17.7 |
| 9 | **Which institution do you work?** | | |
| | Oil and Gas | 69 | 10.6 |
| | Financial Service | 176 | 27.1 |
| | Education | 90 | 13.8 |
| | Consulting | 63 | 9.7 |
| | Tourism and Hospitality | 37 | 5.7 |
| | Building and Construction | 50 | 7.7 |
| | Health Services | 39 | 6.0 |
| | Agriculture | 10 | 1.5 |
| | Telecommunication | 77 | 11.8 |
| | Others | 39 | 6.0 |
| 10 | **Which sector do you work?** | | |
| | Public Sector | 132 | 20.3 |
| | Private Sector | 518 | 79.7 |

**Source:** *Field survey, 2016.*

**Table 2: Responses on Effects of Negative Behaviour**

| S/N | Effects of Negative Behaviour | Cumulative Negative | Cumulative Positive | No Effect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Your physical health and wellbeing | 237 (36.5%) | 137 (21.0%) | 276 (42.5%) |
| 2 | Your mental health and wellbeing | 257 (39.5%) | 155 (23.9%) | 238 (36.6%) |
| 3 | Your confidence and self-esteem | 244 (37.6%) | 199 (30.6%) | 207 (31.8%) |
| 4 | Your work attendance (e.g. days off, sick leave | 257 (39.5%) | 152 (23.4%) | 241 (37.1%) |
| 5 | Your efficiency when at work | 236 (36.3%) | 217 (33.3) | 197 (30.3%) |
| 6 | Your commitment to the organisation | 249 (38.3%) | 220 (33.8%) | 181 (27.8%) |
| 7 | Your relationship with others at work | 206 (31.7%) | 243 (37.4%) | 201 (30.9%) |
| 8 | Your relationship with your friends and families | 197 (30.3%) | 197 (30.3%) | 256 (39.4%) |
| 9 | Your financial circumstances | 224 (34.5%) | 185 (28.4%) | 241 (37.1%) |
| 10 | Your career | 227 (34.9%) | 213 (32.8%) | 210 (32.3%) |
| 11 | Your life overall | 203 (31.2%) | 222 (34.1%) | 225 (34.6%) |
| 12 | Family | 196 (30.1%) | 190 (29.3%) | 264 (40.6%) |

**Source:** *Field survey, 2016*
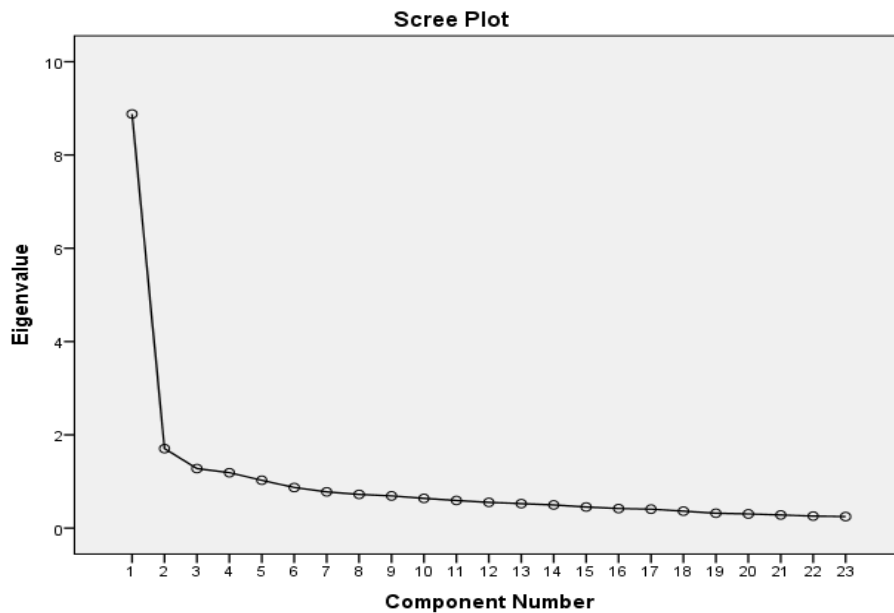
**Figure 1:  Screen plot from factor analysis**



Scree Plot

## Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .918 |
|---|---|---|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 6883.321 |
| | Df | 253 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

## Table 4: Loading of the Bullying Factors
### *Component Matrix (Loading at 0.3 suppressed)*

**Component Matrix$^a$**

| | Component | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Having your opinions and views ignored | .760 | | | | |
| Persistent criticism of your work and effort | .694 | | | | |
| Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger (or rage) | .688 | | -.305 | | |
| Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you are approached | .685 | | -.375 | | |
| Excessive monitoring of your work | .674 | -.337 | | | |
| Intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space | .647 | | -.383 | | |
| Recurrent reminders of your mistakes or faults | .645 | | | | |
| Pressure not to claim something which by right you are eligible to. | .643 | -.328 | | | |
| Hints or signals from others that you should resign your job | .638 | | | | |
| Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection to your work | .633 | .422 | | | |
| Being exposed to an unmanageable workload | .631 | -.355 | .392 | | |
| Threats of violence or physical abuse | .627 | | | | |
| Having insulting or offensive statement made about your person, your attitudes or your personal life | .619 | | -.356 | | |
| Being given responsibilities with awkward or difficult targets or time limits | .611 | | | -.381 | |
| Having key areas of responsibilities detached or substituted with unpleasant tasks | .601 | .450 | | | |
| Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with | .591 | | | .375 | |
| Being the subject of extreme teasing and mockery | .582 | -.428 | | | |
| Being ordered to work below your degree of competence | .577 | .498 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Being exposed to unsuitable resources in the workplace | .575 | | | | -.423 |
| Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you are approached. | .553 | | | .422 | |
| Having accusations made against you | .548 | | | | .318 |
| Someone withholding information which affects your performance | .460 | .403 | | | |
| Spreading of gossip and rumours about me | .541 | | | .352 | .542 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 5 components extracted.

## Table 5: Variance Explained

**Total Variance Explained**

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 8.880 | 38.608 | 38.608 | 8.880 | 38.608 | 38.608 | 3.927 | 17.076 | 17.076 |
| 2 | 1.705 | 7.413 | 46.022 | 1.705 | 7.413 | 46.022 | 3.403 | 14.796 | 31.872 |
| 3 | 1.276 | 5.548 | 51.569 | 1.276 | 5.548 | 51.569 | 2.878 | 12.512 | 44.384 |
| 4 | 1.189 | 5.169 | 56.738 | 1.189 | 5.169 | 56.738 | 1.940 | 8.436 | 52.820 |
| 5 | 1.026 | 4.463 | 61.200 | 1.026 | 4.463 | 61.200 | 1.928 | 8.380 | 61.200 |
| 6 | .871 | 3.786 | 64.987 | | | | | | |
| 7 | .778 | 3.383 | 68.369 | | | | | | |
| 8 | .724 | 3.147 | 71.516 | | | | | | |
| 9 | .691 | 3.002 | 74.519 | | | | | | |
| 10 | .637 | 2.770 | 77.289 | | | | | | |
| 11 | .593 | 2.577 | 79.866 | | | | | | |
| 12 | .553 | 2.404 | 82.270 | | | | | | |
| 13 | .526 | 2.285 | 84.555 | | | | | | |
| 14 | .497 | 2.162 | 86.717 | | | | | | |
| 15 | .453 | 1.968 | 88.685 | | | | | | |
| 16 | .420 | 1.825 | 90.510 | | | | | | |
| 17 | .407 | 1.768 | 92.278 | | | | | | |
| 18 | .364 | 1.581 | 93.860 | | | | | | |
| 19 | .319 | 1.388 | 95.248 | | | | | | |
| 20 | .304 | 1.323 | 96.571 | | | | | | |
| 21 | .283 | 1.229 | 97.800 | | | | | | |
| 22 | .259 | 1.125 | 98.925 | | | | | | |
| 23 | .247 | 1.075 | 100.000 | | | | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.