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A Qualitative Study of Federal Policies on Workplace Bullying

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A Qualitative Study of Federal Policies on Workplace Bullying

by
Cynthia Mary Reese

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approval Page

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Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

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Cynthia Mary Reese

March 14, 2018

Acknowledgments

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing (Isaiah 10:27, King James Version).

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves (Philippians 2:3, King James Version).

Thank you, Jesus, The Christ, The Anointed One, my Lord and Savior for the anointing on this work now and forever. Amen. I praise God for giving me the awesome and important assignment of this task; may the journey continue long after me. I am grateful to Nova Southeastern University for the Doctoral Program and available resources. I am grateful for my Dissertation Chair, Dr. David Weintraub, Committee Member, Dr. William Edmonds, my Director of Contracting, Dissertation Coach, Study Participants, Family, all persons, entities, and individuals that encouraged, motivated, and inspired me along this journey – God bless you all.

Abstract

A Qualitative Study of Federal Policies on Workplace Bullying. Mary Cynthia Reese, 2018: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Keywords: workplace bullying, harassment, hostile work environment, incivility, and workplace violence

The problem that was explored in this qualitative narrative study is the prevalence of bullying in federal government offices. Bullying in the workplace has been on the rise for many years in the U.S. and globally, but research has been limited and under-researched. Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) released survey results from 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2017 confirming the existence of bullying in the workplace. Research on this phenomenon was conducted in the fields of medicine and education, but not in business. Laws and legislation have been neither developed nor enacted to address this phenomenon. Technology in the 21st century introduces another type of bullying with the use of electronic devices. Bullying in the workplace negatively affects employers, employees, and witnesses, either directly or indirectly. Bullying is the misuse of power over others, irrespective of gender or race.

The empowerment theory and catastrophe theory were applied supporting the argument that anyone can be a bully, or the victim of bullying based on the misuse of power and type(s) of personality or personalities involved, and consequences of workplace bullying affect victims, witnesses, and organizations. For this qualitative study, a questionnaire was used on a voluntary and anonymous basis within a diverse workforce of a federal agency. The anonymous survey was sent to 121 federal employees in the western United States. The results were analyzed and concluded that ways of reducing incidences of the phenomenon would be by educating employers and employees on the negative effects on individuals and organizations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2013, the U.S. Office of Diversity and Inclusion outlined in an agency memorandum that bullying is a form of harassment that can lead to a hostile work environment. Godkin (2015) and Wachs (2009) both agreed that workplace bullying consists of a series of unwanted acts and abusive behaviors committed by an individual that often humiliate and offend other members of an organization. Workplace bullying has been known to affect morale and employee commitment and create tension or conflict among employees, negatively affecting productivity.

Research on workplace bullying can be explored under many different keywords like bullying, emotional abuse, and workplace harassment (Judy & McCormack, 2013). Atkinson (2014) supported the notion that bullying is a form of harassment that can create a hostile environment in the workplace, with negative consequences for both the employee and employer. Branch, Ramsay and Barker, (2013) defined *harassment* as unwelcome, uninvited, and repetitive behavior exerted upon one party by another. Moreover, bullying can be viewed as psychological behavior that results from personality differences and conflicts (Duffin, 2014). Kishore (2015) argued that women were more inclined to be the victims of unseen types of workplace violence where employment opportunities were not equal. Workplace bullying can negatively affect the victim's mental and social health, arguably undermining their pride and self-esteem. Employees who fall victim to workplace bullying are placed at a higher risk of increased stress levels, high blood pressure, and other health related conditions. These negative effects can be costly to employers as they seek to recuperate losses generated from employees' increased absences from work, lower productivity, resignation, and ultimately attrition

(Kernan, Watson, Fang & Kim, 2011).

These consequences are often identified within weak organizational and legal systems that have no clear definitions, laws, or policies that facilitate the victim's ability to legally identify the offense or seek retribution through prosecution. These offenses may also lead to additional issues under the cloak of harassment. Workplace bullying, like harassment, is a form of workplace abuse, and occurs as much as four times more often in the United States, where no anti-bullying legislation exists, than in England, Sweden, and Australia (Gumbus & Meglich, 2012; McLaughlin, 2014). Namie and Namie (2011) pointed out that bullying in the workplace often goes unreported because of its varying definitions and limited legislation. The consequences of workplace bullying may subsequently place the victim's health in jeopardy (Akella & Jordan, 2014).

As organizations address the economic costs associated with employee turnover (Gumbus & Lyons, 2011), decreased productivity, and potential lawsuits (Ienciu, 2012), understanding how workplace bullying can be minimized to protect the physical and mental health of employees and the financial health of the organizations has become paramount. The aim of this study was to identify how workplace bullying negatively influences economic and social factors related to an organization's financial health (Oladapo & Banks, 2013). Thus, researching the perceptions of federal employees on workplace bullying to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon is of the utmost importance (Rousseau, Eddleston, Patel & Kellermanns, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The problem that was explored is the prevalence of bullying in federal government offices. Vickers (2014) explained that workplace bullying contributes to

excessive absenteeism, employee turnover, higher no-shows, lower production, and a lack of morale, loyalty, and commitment to the organization. Vickers further argued that there is no clear definition of workplace bullying, nor is there a policy to address non-tolerance and consequences.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) oversight report in 2015 identified that the people working in the healthcare setting are known to have experienced incidences of both employee and patient bullying. The numbers for individually filed complaints were provided nationally for 4 years, starting in 2008 (EEOC, 2012). Of the 15,837 complaints filed in fiscal year (FY) 2012, the most frequently alleged were reprisal or retaliation (7,457) and harassment (5,991), both associated with bullying (EEOC, 2012) (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Complaints Filed as Noted by EEOC 2008-2012

Year of Filing Filed	# of Individuals Filing Claims	Total # of Claims
2008	15,539	16,752
2009	15,825	16,947
2010	16,480	17,583
2011	15,796	16,974
2012	15,206	15,837

Agencies paid monetary benefits to EEOC complainants totaling \$51.4 million in FY 2012, up 18.2% from \$43.5 million paid in FY 2011. An additional \$10.8 million was paid in response to the appellate decisions, a 17.4% increase from \$9.2 million paid out in FY 2011 (EEOC, 2011 & 2012). In FY 2013, the agency began making progress toward implementing a model EEO program in accordance with EEOC's six essential elements: management and program, accountability, proactive prevention of unlawful

discrimination, efficiency, responsiveness, and legal (EEOC, 2012).

In the EEOC 2017 Enforcement and Litigation Data, the agency announced that 84,254 workplace discrimination charges were filed, \$398 million were paid to victims in the private sector, state and local government workplaces (EEOC, 2017). The announcement included the agency handled over 540,000 calls to its toll-free number and over 155,000 field office inquiries. The filed charges were named in descending order from most to least as retaliation 41,097 (48.8% of all charges filed), race 28,528 (33.9%), disability 26,838 (31.9%), sex 25,605 (30.4%), age 18,376 (21.8%), national origin 8,299 (9.8%), color 3,240 (3.8%), Equal Pay Act 996 (1.2%), and genetic information 206 (2%). It was noted in the announcement that the percentages add up to more than 100 because some charges alleged multiple bases (EEOC, 2017). (See Table 2.)

Table 2

Types of Complaints Filed as Noted by the EEOC 2017

Category	#Claims Filed	Percentage
Retaliation	41,097	48.8
Race	28,528	33.9
Disability	26,838	31.9
Sex	25,605	30.4
Age	18,376	21.8
National Origin	8,299	9.89
Color	3,240	3.8
Equal Pay Act	996	1.2

*Percentages add up to more than 100, some charges alleged multiple bases.

Background and justification. Workplace bullying is not a new problem. Donegan (2012) depicted that bullying was unintentionally instilled in children as a survival tactic from a very young age. However, the behavior evolved into something other than survival, bullying became an abuse of power. Chelliah (2014) noted that the term *bullying* is imprecise and that there is no consensus on how to define it. However,

the behaviors must occur regularly over a period of time to be identified as bullying (Godkin, 2015). Godkin further argued that the targets of bullying are emotionally susceptible, and witnesses can inadvertently transfer this susceptibility onto others may cause incidents of bullying to increase due to the negative influence. The focus of this research has been on the origins that influence bullying behaviors among workers and that bullying behavior can have serious psychosocial, emotional, and sometimes fatal consequences for victims (Appelbaum, Semerjian, & Mohan, 2012; Cheang & Appelbaum, 2015), as well as create collateral damage in the lives of others that may be involved.

From 1999 to 2012, there were significant increases of bullying incidents that had fatal results, beginning with one of the most publicized instances: the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado. Two students who had been relentlessly bullied by their peers and whose grievances had been disregarded by the administration brought 50 bombs to school and went on a shooting spree, wounding 23, fatally shooting 13, and eventually taking their own lives (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, O'Toole, Vernberg, & Jellinek, 2002). Twemlow et al. (2007) reported that since the Columbine tragedy, the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education released one key finding regarding school shootings: out of the 37 incidents involving 41 school shooters, many of the attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack. Foster and Brooks-Gunn (2013) reported that violence in schools continued with diverse populations. Espinoza, Gonzales, and Fuligni (2013) agreed there have been increased incidents of student victimization amongst peers.

Kann, et al. (2014) reported that in 2013, the Centers for Disease Control

executed a survey titled *Youth Risk Surveillance Systems Survey*. The authors determined that an estimated 750,000 high school students bring weapons to school. Additionally, an estimated 250,000, or 27%, of those students who bring weapons to school have been victims of bullying on school grounds. The authors expressed that students engaged in behaviors that included to skip school every day because they are anxious and fearful of being bullied by other students. McDaniel, Ngala, and Leonard (2015) reported that when bullying exists between children in the place of play, that same dynamic will eventually emerge in the workplace.

Workplace Bullying

Bullying incidents have been occurring for centuries, but it is only recently that the brutality of a few incidents brought the issue to surface (Onorato, 2013), making it arguably one of the most talked about issues worldwide across multiple disciplines. Donegan (2012) developed a timeline of workplace bullying events involving fatalities of postal workers beginning in 1926 in Australia, again in Canada in 1934, and the U.S. in 1975. Donegan pointed out that since the 1970s, fatalities in the U.S. have continued throughout the country and have been documented in several states; Georgia in 1985, Louisiana in 1988, and Wisconsin in 1997; three separate postal workers killed their supervisor. In 2006, a 13-year Oregon postal worker killed his supervisor by shooting her at close range several times to ensure she was dead, then shot three bullets into the windshield of her car outside and an additional three bullets into the hood of the car. In California in 2006, a postal worker killed his supervisor because he was dissatisfied with his work and the supervisor. Following the spree of postal worker killings, the U.S. Postal Service began a series of “talks” about workplace bullying titled *Bullying: Our Bullying*

Pulpit, developed through EEO Compliance and Appeals and Labor Relations (Twemlow et al., 2002). Donegan (2012) noted that due to budgetary restrictions, the talks have since stopped.

Meglich, Faley, and DuBois (2012) contended that workplace bullying remains under-researched and unmitigated, particularly in U.S. organizations, and that as bullying increased in the workplace, half of working Americans were victims or witnesses of workplace bullying. Stagg and Sheridan (2010) explained that in 2007, the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) reported that 37% of U.S. workers had been bullied that year; almost 18% of the bullies were fellow workers, and that 24% of those who were victimized terminated employment, resulting from workplace bullying. Forty percent of bullied workers resigned, resulting in the loss of 21 million U.S. employees in a workforce already short of trained workers (Stagg & Sheridan, 2010).

Pritam (2010) pointed out that there is no law to file claims for workplace bullying under the term *bullying*, which has not been clearly defined, therefore no legal protection is provided for workplace bullying under federal law. Claims must be filed under other legal categories, such as constructive dismissal, harassment, or discrimination. These measures are not adequate for convicting an individual of workplace bullying or protecting their victims. These categories do not align with workplace bullying because they are either a basic violation which goes to the which goes to the core of the work relationship or the connection between the behavior and protected class the victim would fall under has not been established, making the claim baseless. Moreover, discrimination and harassment address unwanted conduct based on the target's sex or sexual orientation, nationality, disability, belief system, and age, a protected class

under federal law, which places a claim outside the scope of workplace bullying, but under discrimination for the targets of bullying to prove (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 1964).

Workplace bullying problems can affect anyone in an organization if left unresolved, unchecked, and unchallenged. Gilbert, Raffo, and Sutarso (2013) stated “the breadth of the phenomenon encompasses many different forms of behavior,” (p. 79). Wachs (2009) communicated that many workers are not offered training on communication at work, and that furthermore, most are not offered any type of conflict management training, hindering a healthy workplace culture. Wachs’ argument suggested that inappropriate or abusive behavior may spread when an authority figure did not condemn the abusive behavior and the victim was denied the opportunity to confront the perpetrator. The inappropriate or abusive behavior experienced by the bully violated the victim’s dignity, created a hostile, intimidating, degrading, and offensive environment that is detrimental to the victim’s wellbeing. However, claims may be filed as civil or criminal harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act of 1997, where the bullying situation has gone from regrettable to unacceptable, where the victim must prove bullying behavior as harassment. Victims seeking to be compensated for mental or physical injury may file a claim under personal injury.

The process of filing a formal complaint can be daunting and cumbersome for some federal employees who become victims of workplace bullying. The process for federal employees seeking to file a harassment complaint begins with The Office of Resolution Management (ORM). The ORM administers the Department’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint processing system of counseling, procedural

processes, complaint decisions, investigations, and policy compliance. and The ORM also oversees the federal workplace and Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs.

The ADR program is an alternate means of resolving controversies in the workplace: it is more efficient, less expensive, and informally conducted (VA Directive 5978). The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) issues final agency decisions (FAD) based upon an investigative record or final orders following an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) administrative judge's decision (Coffey & Farrisee, 2014). The OEDCA is the third piece of a three-part design that administers agency-wide managerial complaint functions. The failure to develop training and laws to combat workplace bullying has created a substantial accumulation of monetary claims and health related issues that negatively affect the federal government's bottom line (Thirwall, 2015).

Deficiencies in the evidence. Literature exists on the character of bullying in the workplace; however, there is a lack of research available on why workplace bullying occurs and how workplace bullying can be minimized in the local federal agency. The researcher sought to add new information to the current body of knowledge that is focused on reducing and preventing bullying in the federal workplace. Areas of focus for the researcher to address were anti-bullying policies, prevention education, punishment and sanctioning, and victim support.

Audience. This study was a qualitative narrative inquiry of participants who work for a federal agency. The researcher explored the implications of the negative economic effects to the organization, worker, and witnesses caused by workplace bullying. The researcher analyzed the perceptions of federal employees and their experiences with

workplace bullying with regards to the prevalence, health, culture, policy, and training needs relevant to the phenomenon. These results can assist organizational leaders on all levels of management in devising policies, procedures, and training to assist in reducing or eliminating bullying in the workplace. The local research site was an office within the second largest federal agency that provides training and communication on EEO and diversity topics. Making the study more pressing, the agency that was researched is recognized as a federal leader in diversity, with a workforce exceeding 336,000 employees.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the terms bullying, harassment, hostile work environment, incivility, and workplace violence were used relationally.

Bullying, for this study, was defined as behavior defined as a situation when a person feels subject to negative acts in the workplace repeatedly and finds it difficult to defend against as a victim (Atkinson, 2014).

Harassment or *mobbing* are terms often used by Branch et al. (2013) to describe bullying behavior; however, workplace bullying is used consistently throughout the research community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to obtain an understanding of the perceptions held by government employees regarding potential solutions to reduce workplace bullying. McLaughlin (2014) argued that bullied workers quit their jobs more frequently than their non-bullied counterparts, and are more likely to be stressed at work, unhappy, and less committed to the workplace. Often, the bullied worker's recourse is to

resign because their interests are not protected by the limited legislation that is currently available.

Standen, Paull, and Omari (2014) explained that a person's perceptions can influence the way they interpret actions, be it their own or those of others. The authors argued that the interpretations of workplace bullying as perceived by employees' influences the behavior of individuals within the organizations. Human resource professionals, line managers, and investigators are heavily reliant on self-reports of workplace bullying in the management of personnel. Grievance procedures and preventative measures require a greater consideration of the subjectivities associated with the allegations of bullying from all concerned parties. Harrington, Rayner, and Simmel (2012) suggested that the existence of an anti-bullying policy within an organization may assist with the management of bullying allegations; however, the grievance handling process is complicated, and policies alone may not be sufficient.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The objective of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to acquire an understanding of the perceptions of the selected government employees on how they believe the reduction of workplace bullying may be achieved. Giorgi, Leon-Perez, and Arenas (2015) explained that as workplace bullying increases, governmental focus will theoretically shift to cost saving measures to address, reduce, and ultimately move toward eliminating workplace bullying. The authors further explained that exposure to these behaviors fuel job dissatisfaction in employees, among other negative personal consequences.

The literature review search was conducted to identify, assimilate, summarize, and synthesize the studies that report on workplace bullying. The following databases were used: ABI/Inform Collection ProQuest, eBook Collection (EBSCO), Google Scholar, Nova Southeastern University Major Applied Research Projects (NSU MARPs), and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Full and complete articles, which covered several topics that encompassed the phenomenon of workplace bullying, were reviewed by the researcher. An extended database search was conducted by the search criteria of keyword, author, and title, and by using the research definitions of workplace bullying, the effects of bullying on the victim, the effects of personnel bullying on the workplace, the components of effective bullying reduction strategies, gaps in literature, and methodological issues. Additionally, the research criteria included data from empirical studies involving federal employees. The researcher examined and discussed the phenomenon of workplace bullying, which has a history dating back to the nineteenth century, but which has only gained the attention of the government since the beginning of the 21st century.

Historical Perspective

Bullying is not a new phenomenon, though its introduction to literature was presented through a child's fable, *Oliver Twist*, authored by Charles Dickens in 1838 (Donegan, 2012). Dicken's story was about the criminal mistreatment of the child protagonist. The first official report of bullying was the story of John Flood in the August issue of London Times in 1862. In 1897, the first characterization of bullying behavior was published in an article titled *Teasing and Bullying* by Burk in the Pedagogical Seminary. In the article, Burk introduced the concepts of power, pain, persistence, and premeditation in the application of bullying. Olweus (1970) produced the first data in bullying research which was first published in Sweden and then the U.S. in 1978, entitled *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys*. Olweus proposed enacting a law against bullying in schools in 1981. By the mid-1990s the arguments led to legislation by parliaments in Sweden and Norway. In 1993, Olweus published another book, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do* (Donegan, 2012).

Rai and Argarwal (2016) expressed that children who display bullying behavior will develop into adults who display the same or similar characteristics. The authors further argued that this behavior manifests itself in the workplace by adults that were known for bullying in grade school. In addition, the authors reported that bullying behaviors have been correlated between youth that engaged in bullying behaviors and adults that engaged in criminal activities. Last, Rai and Argarwal asserted that verbal assaults and relational aggression are covert, subtle, and nonphysical bullying actions that have been most frequently identified as being exercised in the workplace. The authors explained how the process of investigating bullying in the U.S. differs geographically

from its European counterparts. In Europe, bullying is explored as mobbing, harassment, victimization, and psychological terrorism, while in the U.S. it is explored as aggression, incivility, and emotional abuse of workplace.

Theoretical Orientation of the Study

The theoretical framework that was used in this study encompassed the use of the empowerment theory and catastrophe theory. Workplace bullying presents significant, negative consequences for organizations, individuals, and society; practitioners and scholars have strongly advised organizations to develop and support interventions that will be effective in reducing the impact of this phenomenon (Escartin, Ceja, Navarro, & Zapf, 2013). Recent research complements knowledge of the negative consequences for targets and bystanders, shining light on the detrimental effects to perpetrators also. The researcher expressed that the use of empowerment theory as a theoretical approach allowed for the integrative, holistic view necessary for addressing the needs of the oppressed (Green-Ford, 2013).

Empowerment Theory

Farzaneh, Dehghanpour, and Kazemi (2014) communicated that the empowerment theory has been utilized as an approach connecting economic and social justice with individuals' pain and suffering. The authors expressed empowerment theory has postulated that bullying as an offense to ethics, particularly in relationships involving responsibility for others. Drach-Zahavy and Trogan (2013) reported that empowerment theory explains how interpersonal aggression or acts of aggression toward others undercut the physical or mental integrity of coworkers by neglecting, ignoring, and inciting painful comments, along with being or not having training provided, written or

verbal threats, and uninvited touching. There is a consensus in literature that workplace bullying exists on a premise of the inappropriate exertion of power. Empowerment theory applies to this qualitative narrative in that the aim is to identify ways to reduce or prevent workplace bullying through training and edification on the phenomenon of unhealthy relationships within the workplace.

Catastrophe Theory

Thom, a French mathematician, developed the catastrophe theory in the 1960's. This theory classifies the phenomena under study that are characterized by sudden shifts when behavior changes arise from small changes in circumstances. Lewis and Lewis (2014) explain how the basic tenets of this theory used an inverted U model to demonstrate the decrease in employee performance resulting from high mental anxiety and increased physical anxiety. The theory attempts to predict future human behavior rather than explain how it happens. Lewis and Lewis (2014) portrayed that individuals are prone to certain vulnerabilities exposed to ill-treatment such as cruelty from their superiors or antisocial behavior like repeated taunting and bullying.

In considering the destructive consequences of workplace bullying, Vartia and Leka (2011) stressed the importance of developing individual level interventions through introducing policies and procedures for the prevention of this phenomenon. Cheang and Appelbaum (2015) elaborated on how organizational psychopathy and antisocial personality disorder contribute to inappropriate and negative behavior present in the workplace. The author explained that the linear structure of organizations aligns with the linear connection of the catastrophe theory and the potential deleterious effects on organizations. There was potential for an organization's financial meltdown resulting

from inaction on workplace bullying, in addition to other dire organizational consequences. Vartia and Leka (2011) argued that intervention at the policy level promotes workplace bullying prevention efforts by compelling the attendance to and management of such cases, both ethically and firmly. The aim of these interventions was to facilitate action for bullying reduction and prevention, and to include legislation, best standard practices, statutory regulation, and national policy development. Declarations may need to be signed at the stakeholder's level. Vartia and Leka (2011) further argued that interventions at the policy level are primarily ignored.

Workplace Bullying

There is no consensus on the definition of workplace bullying, Anderson (2011) noted that aggression, intimidation, mobbing, and incivility are often terms used to describe the phenomenon. Bullying in the workplace, also called *mobbing*, generally begins with conflict between two or more members of the same organization and is escalated by the regular and continuous victimization of the target (Karatuna, 2015). Summers (2012) noted that bullying is behavior that may be concealed or done openly; workers may be refused access to supplies, their questions may not be answered, or they may be communicated false or harmful news through email, all which may lead to humiliation. Summers (2012) also pointed out that there are no laws in the U.S. against bullying and no documented steps toward the development of such laws. In Australia, for example, there was a Parliamentary inquiry examining bullying in the workplace following the escalation of attack on Australia's first female prime minister. The author noted that inside Parliament, there was an inquisition on behavior that was intentionally humiliating, such as sexually explicit cartoons that were graphic and degrading.

Bullying Statistics

Bullying is a growing problem in the workplace (Stagg, Sheridan, & Daniel, 2010). Stagg, Sheridan, Jones, and Speroni (2013) supported the argument that there is an increase of bullying by workers on the job. The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) conducted national surveys in 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2017 of workers to measure the prevalence of workplace bullying in the U.S. The surveys have yielded more than 15,042 responses combined.

Of the 2007 survey sample population (7,740 adults) 37% responded that they had experienced this phenomenon, 13% were being bullied at the time the survey was underway, and 24% had previously been bullied at the workplace. The survey reported that 72% of bullies were identified as the victims' superiors; 60% of the perpetrators were male and 40% were female, with 57% of all targets being female and 34% being male. The survey also found that 71% of female bullies targeted other females and that 34% of male bullies targeted other males. Table 2 corroborates this data.

The WBI reported that the 2007 survey was the first national report on the state of workplace bullying completed in the U.S. The prevalence of workplace bullying reported by the WBI in 2007 was four times more than the harassment reported that year: 62% of employers ignored the complaints and consequences of workplace bullying; 45% of targets suffered from issues related to stress; 40% of workers never reported the incidents to their employers; and 3% of workers that had been bullied filed lawsuits (Tables 3 & 4).

In 2010, the WBI combined two survey results of 6,302 U.S. adults. This consolidated data concluded that 35% of employees experienced workplace bullying, 62% of whom were bullies were males and 58% of targets were females.

Table 3

WBI Workplace Bullying Data From 2007

Sample Population	Current Bullied	Prev. Bullied	Have been Bullied*	Boss Bullies	Male Bullies	Female Bullies	Female Targets	F T F Targets	Males Target
7,740	13%	24%	37%	72%	60%	40%	57%	71%	34%

*Data as reported by the <http://www.workplacebullying.org/wbiresearch/wbi-2007/>

* Female target female

Table 4

<i>WBI Workplace Bullying Data From 2007 by Percentage</i>			
Employers Ignored the Issue	Targets suffered stress	Workers did not report	Filed Lawsuits
62	45	40	3

The number of incidences in which women targeted other women were 80% of reported cases. The reported instances of workplace bullying were four times the reported rate of workplace harassment, with 68% of the males reporting being bullied by other males and 58% of females reporting being bullied by other females. The researchers reported that 13% of the participants had witnessed bullying in the workplace (Table 5).

Table 5

<i>WBI Data from 2010 Workplace Bullying by Gender</i>					
Number of Participants	All	Male	Female	Female vs. Female	Male vs. Male
6,302	35%	62%	58%	80%	68%

The WBI 2014 survey of 1,000 U.S. adults concluded that 72% of U.S. workers were aware of bullying in the workplace; management-level operatives and employers were most often the perpetrators; 72% of employers did not address the issue; and 93% of workers responded favorably in support of the Healthy Workplace Bill legislation (Table 6).

Table 6

Results of 2014 WBI Survey Support of a Healthy Workplace

Number of Participants	Percentage Aware of Bullying	Perpetrator	Support of Healthy Workplace
1,000	72%	72%	93%

The WBI 2017 survey of 1,008 U.S. adults reported that 19% of Americans were bullied in the workplace while another 19% witnessed it. Awareness of abusive conduct in the workplace was identified at 61%. Out of the sample, males were perpetrators 70% of time and females were targets 60% of the time.

In addition, Hispanics were the most frequently bullied race, however empirical support was not provided. Management-level operatives and employers were reported as bullies 61% of the time, acting alone in 63% of the instances they bullied another member of their organization. 40% of the targets were believed to suffer adverse health effects, with 29% of them remaining silent about their experiences. Workers reported that 71% of the time employer reactions were harmful and 60% of the time coworker reactions were harmful. As a result, there were 65% of targets reported losing their jobs to stop the bullying. 77% of U.S. workers declared support for legislation that formally condemns and punishes workplace bullying, and 45% reported that job or work relations had worsened since the Trump administration took office in 2017 (Tables 7 & 8).

Table 7

WBI Workplace Bullying Prevalence Data 2017

Sample Pop.	Current Bullied	Witnessed Bullying	Aware of Bullying	Male Bullies	Females Bullied	Bully Bosses	Targets Adversely Affected
1,108	19%	19%	61%	70%	60%	61%	40%

Table 8

WBI Effects of Workplace Bullying Data 2017

Sample Pop.	Bully Bosses	Targets Affected	Target's Silent	Employers Harmful	Coworkers Harmful	Targets Leave	Supports Needs	Bullying Worse
1,108	61%	40%	29%	71%	60%	65%	70%	45%

The aggregate data presented by the WBI provides significant, quantitative support to the assertions that bullying exists in the workplace within the U.S. and that laws and policies are not only entirely lacking, but also critical to addressing and resolving the phenomenon of workplace bullying.

Bullying, Harassment, and a Hostile Work Environment

Bullying is connected with harassment. It is characterized by offensive behavior, intimidation, and malicious or insulting acts done to another with the intent to cause harm (Goldman & Lewis, 2006). Persistence is also a defining feature of bullying, so behaviors need to be recurrent and ongoing (NgaleIlongo, 2015). The bully may operate without any apparent motivation, making the behavior offensive and unwelcome and leaving the victim with no means with which to make amends or reason with the perpetrator (Goldman & Lewis, 2006). Plopa, Plopa, and Skuzinska (2017) pointed out that harm may be both psychological and physical, and that bullies typically seek to incite emotions associated with stress. These emotions can generate symptoms such as distress, headaches, nausea, insomnia, an inability to concentrate, and, in some cases, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Thirwall (2015) agreed that harm can be viewed as a vital feature of bullying. Thus, without harm, bullying does not exist.

Mathisen, Ogaard, and Einarsen (2012) explained it as exclusion, which may cause mental harm to the targeted victims. For example, a worker may be annoying to a

coworker or supervisor unknowingly, provoking a bully without knowing it, who may retaliate by excluding or rejecting him or her. The researchers reported that one to four percent of people in the workforce are victims, and that 8-10% are witnesses of bullying in the workplace. The prevalence of this phenomenon suggests that bullying in the workplace has been normalized: the overwhelming indifference displayed by both employers and employees alike is another byproduct of workplace bullying that contributes to the deterioration of its victims' wellbeing and productivity.

Chelliah (2014) stated that the awareness of bullying in the workplace began its development in the 1990s. The authors explored the effects of aggression, incivility, and other behaviors related to the phenomenon as well as their impact on individuals, organizations, and the relationship of the behaviors to the "perception of bullying," (p. 286). Their findings were that over 50% of staff either experienced or witnessed negative behaviors.

According to Atkinson (2014), the literature on bullying and harassment was limited until 2005. The literature available then suggested that bullying had been increasing, and studies conducted from 2003 to 2005 showed an increase of bullying prevalence from three to seven percent. Atkinson completed a comparison study that showed an association between the mental and physical repercussions from falling victim or contributing to bullying, suggesting that bullying is becoming more prevalent. Stern (2016) pointed out that bullying behavior may be compared to the verbal or nonverbal intimidation tactics of animals in attack mode. However, many may not recognize hostile or contemptuous looks of a bully when feeling threatened by another person, as one animal to another animal would. Stern (2016) reported that he agreed with Charles

Darwin's study conducted in 1872 on similar behaviors and expressions of human beings and animals where he observed the ways that communication is done through looks and sounds. The study revealed that, much like animal behavior, bullies also use visible expressions to intimidate by using hostility to communicate contempt or disdain. Bullies, through animal-like behavior, may communicate a warning before attack, such as a curled upper lip. A sneer, showing one or more teeth is even more aggressive. In the workplace, such expressions harass, put down, intimidate, and freeze out the targets. They degrade the targets and the target's morale, commitment to work, and productivity. Stern (2016) suggested that anti-bullying policies should also address non-verbal and non-physical harassment.

Workplace Abuse and Violence

Goldman and Lewis (2006) argued that bullying in the workplace involves the misuse of power to belittle, humiliate, insult, or injure another person, and is discriminatory behavior prohibited by law. Bullying is typically carried out in the form of harassment based on the legally protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, race, or sexual orientation. Workplace violence and physical and emotional abuse is an issue for some organizations, particularly where employees work alone or in remote locations. For example, call-center workers are at risk of experiencing verbal abuse (Silcox, 2016). Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2011) and Mathisen et al. (2012) expressed, in separate studies, that workplace bullying or harassment that escalated to aggressive and hostile behavior is closely related to mental abuse. The researchers asserted that aggressive and hostile behavior that targeted the victim may cause physical harm when mental needs to be a part of the organization are not met and exclusion and frustration are initiated, destroying

trust.

Workplace Bullying Personality Types

Leon-Perez et al. (2015) explained that there is a motivational difference between dispute-related bullying and predatory bullying. Dispute-related bullying is founded upon highly emotional and interpersonal conflicts between coworkers. Predatory bullying is driven by the desire to either maintain status or to rid oneself of stress and frustration. Leon-Perez et al. relayed that acts of bullying and conflict are individuated by a time factor: bullying occurs over a period, while conflicts may occur as isolated incidents.

Mathisen, Einarsen, and Mykletun (2011) explained that conscientious personalities could feel some responsibility for others; but explain that conscientiousness may not prevent harmful behavior or resolve conflicts. The authors believed this lack of action may result in a hostile environment or be looked upon as harassment or bullying in the workplace. Neurotics create hostility in the work environment through intimidation, unpleasantness, social distancing, anger, and being uncooperative. O'Moore and Crowley (2011) pointed out that people with neurotic personalities tend to avoid others, withdraw themselves from social interaction, and self-blame, among other similarly negative coping strategies. . They are also more likely than other personality types to experience anger, depression, and other antagonistic sentiments that cause them to react hostilely to their colleagues (O'Moore & Crowley, 2011). Mathisen et al. (2011) characterized neurotics as intensely angry, cynical, and uncooperative. The authors classified neurotic behavior as psychologically abusive such that when it is imposed in perpetuity, it often has a negative, physical effect on the individual and those exposed to it. When supervisors are categorized as neurotic, they doubt whether their workers had gotten the

job done.

O'Moore and Crowley (2011) explained that extraverts display psychological traits contrary to those of neurotics: extraverts are assertive, sociable, friendly, and positive. The authors explained that extraverts may experience fluctuating emotions and have unrealistic expectations of the other members in their organization. This suggests that the irrationality of extroverts may have severe effects of bullying in the workplace. Liu, Zhang, Liao, Hao, and Mao (2016) explained the creativity of extroverts was impeded by the effects of workplace bullying. Mathisen et al. (2011) discussed introversion in comparison to extraversion: introverts lead with a hands-off and detached approach. The authors linked introverted supervisors to bullying because they were more reserved, exhibit less willingness to help, and communicate ineffectively.

O'Moore and Crowley (2011) described agreeable individuals as trusting, helpful, and non-confrontational. The researchers found that the non-confrontational characteristic of the agreeable personality may not allow for the overt display of bullying behavior since that personality type does not normally fuel conflicts in the workplace. However, Mathisen et al. (2011) communicated that agreeable personality types may contribute to high organizational costs with focus on tasks getting completed and may allow bullying to occur or impose bullying to achieve those tasks. Open personality types create, imagine, ask questions, and think in different ways, explains O'Moore and Crowley (2011). They employ a range of emotions inconsistently and may be unsympathetic towards others. The authors concluded their analysis on personality type contribution to workplace bullying by suggesting that there is no one personality that increases or decreases the prevalence of the phenomenon more than any other

personality. Mathisen et al. (2011) finalized their findings by stating that there is a relationship between the employee's perception of the supervisor's personality and bullying in the workplace: emotion fuels perceptions, and perception can intensify unresolved conflicts. Both studies demonstrate that personalities are brought in the workplace and can form or break relations.

Other Nontraditional Bullying Types

According to Nash (2012), bullying has increased because of the heightened use of the internet. Cyberbullying, a nontraditional, network-based form of bullying, has grown with the increased accessibility of technology in homes, schools, and workplaces (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013). Hinduja and Patchin (2007) explained that the use of technology to intentionally cause harm to another person, or cyber victimization, has been associated with depression and suicide. Summers (2012) argued that social media has provided a new way to intimidate, bully, and defame victims. In addition, email, YouTube, and Facebook are being used to vilify, degrade, and create an atmosphere of disrespect.

Over the past 10 years, cyberbullying has become a major topic of technological, social, and political debate. Arntfield (2015) pointed out that cyberbullying, like bullying, remains both undefined and underreported. Arntfield reported that neither the technology providers nor lawmakers and law enforcement have any substantial way to identify, arrest, or prosecute cyber bullies. The author relayed that cyberbullying is also called "cybermobbing, flaming, and trolling," (p. 372). Piotrowski (2012) argued that cyberbullying, harassment conducted through electronic devices, is categorized as e-harassment, and includes cyber abuse and cyberstalking. E-harassment has gained

attention in the U.S. and worldwide as companies and organizations become more technologically dependent (Piotrowski, 2012).

Goldman and Lewis (2006) defined cyberbullying as malicious communications via speaking, watching, posting, telephoning, faxing, emailing, and texting by short message service (SMS). Piotrowski (2012) explained that cyberbullying may be annoying or irritating behavior at work, but may become threatening and harmful, evolving into cyberstalking. Williams (2014) pointed out that technology enables the aggressor to inflict bullying and harassment onto more targets with ease and for longer periods of time than tradition means before it is discovered. The author further stated that cyberbullying escalation typically occurs over the internet as it does in person, beginning with intimidating language and escalating to threats.

Chisholm (2014) addressed the topic of global cyberbullying over the last 10 years, which has affected all ages of adults in the workplace, including teenagers, college students, and young adults ages 15 to 29, throughout the world. Chisholm communicated that cyber bullying has been executed through the use of cellular phones, computers, and other technologies, in addition to some similar contemporary methods. Chisholm referenced four suicides between 2006 and 2013 that were publicized very highly and linked to cyberbullying, producing new terms like *bullycide* or *cyber-bullycide* (p.78). Nash (2012) confirmed that a college student jumped off a bridge after being the victim of a cyberattack by his roommate, leading to the September 1, 2011 anti-bullying Bill of Rights in New Jersey. Chisholm (2014) pointed out that with the introduction of Instagram in 2010, intimidating or threatening photos and videos can be shared online in just a few seconds, as well as through other social media outlets like Facebook, Flickr,

Tumblr, and Twitter. Bonanno and Hymel (2013) expressed that perpetrators of cyberbullying can remain anonymous and invisible since the bullying takes place in a virtual setting, unlike traditional face-to-face bullying. The authors added that the bully may not know the effects of the attack on the target since they do not see the victim and their methods of coping, despite the effects being detrimental. In the uncontrollable World Wide Web, it is not easy, if even possible, to wipe out cyberbullying. The author pointed out that cyberbullying may take place anytime, day or night, and targets may be infinite in numbers.

Ryan (2016) pointed out that cyber-bullying at work is not restricted to work hours; the internet provides unlimited access around the clock, all year long. This suggests that a potential victim's exposure to cyber abuse and cyberstalking is unlimited. Arntfield (2015) suggested that most incidents are not reported due to the lack of legislation, and Hindu and Patchin (2008) believed that the incidents are substantially under-reported. When any form of bullying, involves race and sex, it violates the Race Relations Act of 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, respectively. Chisholm (2014) noted that messages, photos, or videos with sexual content sent through cellular phones introduced a new term, *sexting*.

Ryan (2016) explained that there is a form of bullying through written communications in which several words are delivered in a bold font, underlined, italicized, highlighted, and unformatted, causing confusion to the target. As a result, the recipient cannot understand the message or has difficulty understanding it. When electronic messages are exchanged between the bully and their victim, the bully may change the subject in a round of communication, making it difficult or impossible to find

a portion of a conversation, irritating and frustrating the recipient(s). The author has identified a controlling characteristic with which a bully exercises power over others. Ryan (2016) contended that a bully may exercise control over information by refusing to put things in writing and would have talked face to face to avoid having the conversation recorded. Due to the increased use of technology in the workplace and its utility as a means for antagonism, this researcher sought to raise awareness of cyberbullying in the workplace to combat the further spread of the phenomenon.

Of approximately 54 million workers in the U.S., 37% reported that they were bullied at work, yet there are no laws against bullying (Indvik & Johnson, 2012). Sixteen states have tried to pass legislation against bullying over the past 10 years, with some having made attempts almost five times (Indvik & Johnson, 2012). Vega (2005) stated that bullying gets much less attention in the U.S. than it does in countries. Blackwood and Bentley (2013) examined federal laws that existed to reduce workplace bullying and compared the federal laws of Australia to those of New Zealand.

The initiative in Australia blends federal occupational health and safety laws to combat bullying in the workplace. Some states in Australia, per Blackwood and Bentley (2013), have taken steps to make bullying in the workplace criminal, and submitted federal legislative changes in January 2014 to place accountability on employers who fail to prevent bullying in the workplace. Blackwood and Bentley (2013) also stated that the response in New Zealand is to maintain things as they are and provide education to employers and their employees in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Business Innovations (MBIE).

Conflict may begin with unusually heavy work assignments, and then escalate to

the person being criticized, humiliated, isolated, assigned menial duties, and threatened with violence. At the peak of such exaggerated dynamics, the target may be fired or choose to resign (Karatuna, 2015). Leon-Perez, Medina, Arenas, and Mundane (2015) explained that conflicts related to tasks assigned to two or more persons may develop when differences on use of available resources or procedures to adhere to are present, coupled with the use of power. The way conflict is handled plays an important role in its escalation. A party's perpetual abuse of force over another can evolve into bullying and begin to break down the work relationship, relayed Leon-Perez et al. (2015).

Brewer and Whiteside (2012) expressed that 35% to 50% of U.S. workers have been targets of bullying during their time in the workforce. The authors pointed out that bullying may become physical is reported less often in the workplace. Physical bullying in the workplace is often done subtly and was not always addressed. Bullying that is not addressed may intensify and lead to more aggressive behavior towards victims.

Effects of Bullying on Health and Wellness of the Victim

Taneja (2014) reported several statistics demonstrating how job dissatisfaction resulting from violence or the threat of violence and bullying behavior had a negative effect on a target's work. The author stated that 28% of bullying victims lost productive time at work to avoid the instigator, and 53% of victims lost productive time at work as a result of anxiety from the incident that occurred or future incidents. Additionally, 37% of targets believed that their commitment to the organization declined, 22% decreased their efforts at work, and 10% decreased the amount of time spent at work. Lastly, 46% contemplated changing jobs to avoid the instigator, while 12% did change jobs to avoid the perpetrator. Taneja (2014) explained that the negative impact of uncivil behaviors has

damaging effects on a target's physical well-being and leads to increased turnover intentions, higher burnout, and lessens employees' commitment and contribution to the organization.

Bullying has a negative effect on victims and witnesses and can induce anxiety and stress which in turn reduces job satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty. Sheehan and Griffiths (2011) identified how bullying affects persons who address the incidents. Attorneys, medical providers, counselors, and family members of the offender, victim, or witness may also experience health issues. The mental issues include but are not limited to anxiety, irritability, depression, and anger. Physical issues consist of having trouble sleeping and eating, headaches, and high blood pressure. Bullying in the workplace is intentional, repetitive, and abusive behavior that has negative effects on individuals and organizations. The effects usually result from the misuse of power to intimidate, demean, or humiliate an individual, relays (Askew, Schluter, and Dick, 2013).

McLaughlin (2014) pointed out that many victims of bullying do not realize that they are being bullied, and often become worn down, feeling incapable of defending themselves without understanding why. McLaughlin characterized bullying as a form of abuse that can cause mental health harm. It is an assault on the victim's self-confidence and self-esteem.

Ashraf and Khan (2014) reported that workplace bullying done by a supervisor has an undesirable impact on job performance and emotional intelligence. The authors did not differentiate between bullying and similar terms, describing it as the following: psychological violence, intimidation and humiliation, acts of belittlement, criticism of abilities and competence, invention of mistakes, setting difficult goals, refusing relevant

information, coercing work, and behavior that can result in drinking problems, depression, career dissatisfaction, stress, and psychological distress. According to Ashraf and Khan (2014), victims of workplace bullying can become offended and socially excluded, which could negatively affect work tasks.

Aleassa and Megdadi (2014) pointed out that there is a major concern for the negative consequences for individuals and organizations caused by bullying in the workplace. Bullying is an undesirable and dysfunctional behavior unwanted by the victim and may cause an employee to feel powerless to restore a sense of control or justice; if an employee feels powerless, they may engage in deviant or unethical behavior. Aleassa and Megdadi (2014) found that unethical and deviant behavior can result in poor performance and a loss of customers.

Olive and Cangemi (2015) and Leon-Perez et al. (2015) noted that bullying in the workplace has increased exponentially, negatively impacting the victims' health, attendance, and commitment, and consequently the organizations' productivity. The authors reported that surveys conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) revealed that 35% of American employees are victims of workplace bullying. Another 15% reported being witnesses to bullying incidents first hand. Additionally, Olive and Cangemi (2015) reported that 90% of employees, face bullying from leadership throughout their careers. The authors' report concluded that bullying is a problem in the U.S. that needs to be addressed.

Bullying research has increased over the past 20 years, with studies that showed its prevalence in the workplace in the U.S. (Al-Karim, 2013). Attention to workplace bullying and its negative consequences for the wellbeing of employees is a fairly new

topic of discussion, dating back only to the early 1990s (Giorgi et al., 2015). Al- Karim (2013) reported Fox and Stallworth conducted a study in 2005 that revealed many bullying behaviors to be relatively subtle, affecting the target and witness.

Al-Karim (2013) argued that bullying behaviors, though subtle, are intensified by the perpetrator when the target does not recognize what is occurring. Witnesses to bullying are also affected by the environment created in this dynamic. Specifically, the researcher found that targets were more likely to suffer from physical and mental health complications like depression, alcohol abuse, and suicide. Similarly, witnesses were found to also suffer physical and mental health issues including guilt, fear, insomnia, headaches, and fatigue.

Distrust of Management

Parker (2014) discussed the misuse of power in organizations that have a culture of compliance based on fear, not trust. The author explained that bullies communicated with targets in various ways that render them powerless and unable to defend themselves. The author noted that the abuse worsens when bullies are rewarded, and the abusive behavior is supported or accepted in the workplace. Parker (2014) expressed that targets that had little or no means of defending themselves did not speak up and remained silent in fear of retaliation.

Granstra (2015) agreed that bullies may exert more power because management has given it to them or the bully feels more powerful over targets based on education, tenure, or relationships within the organization. According to Granstra, when targets feel defenseless, the bully is empowered. The author expressed that nurses are often victims in workplaces where there is a disparity of power. Walrafen, Brewer, and Mulvenon

(2012) reported nurses who explained that when role and bureaucracy are the underlying management systems, power becomes the management style. The authors relayed that policy-based organizations with some crisis management have cultures that is power-based. Subordinates must obey instructions based on position and rank without questioning, similar to the rank and file in the military.

Bullying and Diversity in the Workplace

Employers have anticipated that diversity in the workplace makes for better information sharing, cognizance, and the achievement of organizational goals through inclusion. Khan and Khan (2012) confirmed that every workplace has become diverse. Learning, respecting, and valuing differences must be a commonplace and daily practice to achieve fair treatment and inclusion of workers. Research revealed positive and negative effects of diversity on methods and results of an organization's experiences. Chekwa and Thomas (2013) acknowledged that organizations may be negatively impacted by employee turnover, absenteeism, raised insurance premiums, lawsuits filed, and productivity reduction. The authors explained that workplace bullying is a fairly new phenomenon and is linked to harassment. The lack of a clear definition of bullying has been an obstacle for workers in pursuit of justice against their bullies when they are challenged with identifying the abusive behavior against them. Bergbom, Vartiainen, and Kinninen (2015) explained that people often assemble social circles by congregating with others of a similar ethnicity or gender. Thus, the minority, or less powerful groups, are often subject to bullying by members of the majority group because of their differences. For example, a minority worker that is an immigrant may look or speak differently from other members of the organization. Difficulties in communication

and understanding their culture can easily make this person a target for workplace bullying because these characteristics differentiates this individual from members of the majority group.

Paull and Omari (2015) claimed that workplace bullying is not exclusive to paid workers: volunteers have also reportedly experienced bullying. Volunteers add value to organizations and economy but research on this sect is very limited, although equally important to that of paid workers. The authors conveyed that volunteers had been bullied by other volunteers, paid staff workers, and managers, and had witnessed bullying others. Volunteers reported their bullying encounters to be the same or similar as those of paid workers. Volunteers dealt with verbal abuse, high workloads, yelled at, profanely spoken to, and excluded from groups and activities. Brewer and Whiteside (2012) reported that aggressive behavior exists in the penal system between coworkers. Police officers and correctional officers working in a masculine dominant environment may encounter potential danger, and some aggression may be required to carry out the duties of employment. In their study, the authors revealed that 64% of workers witnessed bullying at work in the penal system.

The Code of Ethics, as discussed by Matt (2012), includes behaviors that violate work and professional principles. Among those principles is justice. A basic characteristic of justice is treating others fairly and not taking away another's rights or protection. In the U.S., workers are given the right to a safe and healthy work environment. Bullying violates the principle of justice because it creates a hostile work environment. Existing efforts to reduce workplace bullying has yet to connect the phenomenon to a lack of ethical principles, and overwhelmingly focuses on seeking

individual accountability instead of organizational accountability. Organizations may not necessarily be directly responsible for individual incidents of bullying, but they should be held accountable for their efforts (or lack thereof) to reduce its presence (Einarsen, Mykletun, Einarsen, Skogstad, & Salin, 2017).

Reducing Incidents of Workplace Bullying to Increase Job Satisfaction

Taneja (2014) communicated that employers should create an open-door policy that stimulates communication between managers and employees and that employers should recognize prevention of workplace bullying and violence as a wise business strategy. Taneja (2014) also reported that the identification of certain behaviors and educating and counseling employees on how to deal with a hostile environment can be beneficial, suggesting that employers should provide emotional support for employees who experience bullying. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) recommended that employers establish a no-tolerance policy for workplace violence, including bullying and verbal and nonverbal threats. Employers should clearly define workplace violence in codes of conduct, make it clear that employees would not suffer reprisals for reporting inappropriate conduct at work, establish protocols for investigating reports of workplace violence, and take disciplinary and remedial actions against workplace violence (Taneja, 2014).

The federal government, an employer and lawmaker, may put measures in place to prevent bullying and penalize perpetrators. Silcox (2016) developed a model for organizations to follow with programs to address workplace bullying, harassment, violence, traumatic incidents, and stress management. Silcox's model points out that those organizations have legal obligations to the health and safety of employees as per the

Health and Safety at work Act of 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations of 1999, both of which are listed in the model.

Goldman and Lewis (2006) explained that the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 requires employers to ensure that their employees have a safe place to work. The authors further stated that many large employers use occupational health input in order to establish procedures for reporting bullying and harassment in addition to the standard grievance procedures. The authors mentioned that the federal government has established a model to comply with the Act.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released its fiscal year 2013 performance and accountability report with a vision of justice and equality in the workplace that strives to stop and remedy unlawful employment discrimination. The agency expected its improved labor management relations model to provide guidance to local management forums and other programs directed at employee morale. (EEO Model, 2013)

Bully-Free Environment

A statement of strategic effort was released in the 2013 report issued by the EEOC. Interagency partnerships with several federal agencies working together were introduced. One focus is Leadership in Federal Civil Rights Enforcement. Another focus is Improved Labor-Management Relations, pursuant to the President's Executive order 13522. The objective is to provide guidance to local management in forums directed at improving employee morale. Supervisors and team leaders are encouraged to talk with employees about their performance and to treat them with respect (EEO, 2013).

Synthesis of the Literature Findings

Harassment is unwelcomed, repetitive behavior exerted upon someone by another person to cause harm (Branch et al., 2013). The bullying phenomenon is widespread partly because of the challenge of identifying it as such. Godkin (2015) and Wachs (2009) acknowledged that bullying in the workplace is a global phenomenon that consists of unwanted behaviors that humiliate and offend and that may lead to hostility in the workplace. Atkinson (2014) supported the concept that bullying is a form of harassment with negative consequences for the employer and employee.

Burns and Pope (2007) and Pritam (2010) agreed that there is no concise definition of workplace bullying. Additionally, there are no laws to address incidences of workplace bullying; anyone in an organization may be affected by workplace bullying, for it encompasses many different forms of behavior (Gilbert et al., 2013). Goldman and Lewis (2006) stated that bullying and harassment within the work environment includes being humiliated or ridiculed at work, being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when one approaches management and being subjected to excessive sarcasm and teasing. Personalities and traits of workplace bullying behavior have been the focus of literature for centuries, beginning in the nineteenth century with Francis Galton, in 1884, who explored the possibility of developing a grouping of personality traits by sampling language. O'Moore and Crowley (2011) and Ryan (2016) agreed that the bully's personalities type influences the bullying behavior. The authors expressed how each personality type could have influence on the victim's experience with workplace bullying, which may result in stressful job conditions and ultimately lead to illness or injury of the victim. When this happens, filing a claim for workplace bullying may be

daunting; due to the lack of laws, claims must be filed under a different category, such as harassment (Coffey & Farrisee, 2014). Organizations are adversely affected by workplace bullying, as identified by Vickers (2014), with absenteeism, turnover, and low morale. Namie and Sandvik (2010) reported that, in the past 12 years, workplace bullying has not received publicity or attention based on the content except for high profile cases associated with a celebrity or with graphic content involved. Like employees of private organizations, government employees can, too, be victims of bullying, as in the Iceland scenario of 2008.

Hilmarrsson (2013) focused on the financial crisis of 2008 in Iceland where the largest three banks, along with several small banks, collapsed and many companies and organizations went bankrupt. There were catastrophic consequences for the country's economy and people. The Icelanders were advised to expand by joining the Eurosystem (EU), a system immune to insolvency. However, the British federal government was reported as having engaged in severe and outrageous bullying behavior towards the Icelandic federal government, linear tactics characterized by the catastrophe theory. Iceland's Government was isolated and unable to assemble assistance. As a result, Iceland entered into negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), agreeing on a program of stabilizing the economy. What happened to the Icelandic Government reportedly has happened in organizations, in that the workplace bully may present him or herself as a comrade.

Ryan (2016) argued that bullying undermines happiness and security, causing the target to feel weak and insecure. The bully may not have close family or friends and may try to make allies of the ones preyed upon. Unfortunately, bullies may help to raise

someone unqualified to a position of authority, which weakens the organization. As O'Malley and Crowley pointed out, the personality of the bully can contribute to a hostile workplace, created by the desire to control and exercise power. Combined, these actions propel workplace bullying as characterized by the theories of catastrophe and empowerment.

Summary

Bullying in the workplace is a phenomenon that has risen through many years in the U.S. and globally. The behavior is masked through various terms, for laws and legislation have not been developed to address it directly (Hemmings, 2013). Harassment, mobbing, and incivility are some of the alternative descriptions for traditional, in-person bullying characterized Hayes (2013). Bullying in the twenty-first century has taken on a nontraditional form through the increased use of electronic devices. Bullying in the workplace has caused health problems, both mentally and physically, for victims, witnesses, and organizations. Many times, victims are not aware of the bullying they are experiencing because it is perpetrated in subtle ways like the uneven delegation of heavy workload assignments or the inconspicuous misuse of power a leader or supervisor may exert over a subordinate. Colleagues and coworkers may bully one another through unpleasantness, a lack of cooperation, and social distancing. Organizations have incurred costs from claims filed under laws of harassment, discrimination, and injury to victims. Recruiting and hiring replacement employees when a victim has left the organization is a negative consequence of the phenomenon.

Bullying in the workplace is nondiscriminatory. Bullying personalities have been exhibited in males and females within both large and small organizations. The

phenomenon has spread in the U.S. and globally, which has shown that there are neither geographical nor cultural bounds. Culture has been a contributing factor to bullying in some workplaces. Bullying has been reported in organizations of dominant rank-in-file power structures where the bully has been given power by management.

In the U.S., workers have the right to a safe workplace, including a safe environment. Bullying has been reported to cause a hostile environment. Bullying that is not addressed may escalate to violence in the workplace. Anti-bullying laws and policies are needed to address the phenomenon directly, not through alternative measures. Awareness through education and training for leaders and workers would benefit organizations, victims, and witnesses.

Research Questions

This study was guided utilizing the following research questions:

1. What techniques or training do employees recommend to reduce incidents of bullying?
2. What are the local federal office employees' perceptions of how bullying cases are handled?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

Research on workplace bullying, though limited, has routinely focused on the engagement in inappropriate and harmful behaviors as well as poor and abusive leadership styles. (Lui, Zhang, Hao, & Mao, 2016). The aim of this qualitative narrative inquiry on workplace bullying was to contribute additional research to the field of organizational leadership by providing data that may assist in the reduction or elimination of workplace bullying.

Qualitative Research Approach

This study was approached as a qualitative narrative inquiry. The aim of the study was to reduce or eliminate the phenomenon of workplace bullying. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of the consequential effects that workplace bullying caused for organizations and their staff was critical to successfully achieve the objective of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

When used in a study, qualitative research methodology began with the use of a theoretical or interpretational framework. This framework informed readers of the phenomenon that addressed a problem of humanity or society. In studying the problem, the researcher's approach emerged to inquiry and data collection in a manner that should neither compromise the sensitivity of people nor the study location. (Creswell, 2011).

This qualitative narrative inquiry used online open-ended survey questions utilizing the storytelling narrative process to understand and learn about the workplace bullying phenomenon in a federal agency. The open-ended survey design allowed the researcher to comprehend the perception of the agency's employees regarding the

phenomenon of workplace bullying. This study analyzed the participant responses for each question within the survey to determine the common themes that identify the perceptions and feelings related to workplace bullying. The qualitative analysis was completed utilizing Microsoft Excel 2016 to assist in the coding and sorting of text data to determine the common themes relevant to the phenomenon (Korsgaard, 2013).

Qualitative narrative inquiry was the appropriate research perspective because it could assist in understanding the complex and dynamic experiences that were derived from working in an environment where workplace bullying may be prevalent. The objective outcome of the narrative approach in this study was to identify to leaders the need to make a change from no policies addressing workplace bullying to developing an anti-bullying policy of zero tolerance in their respective organizations (Sarkar, 2015). The data collection method for this study was an open-ended survey that was made available to approximately 121 federal employees that allowed the insight of participants to be shared on workplace bullying in their words (Pisarik, Rowell, & Thompson, 2017).

Participants

The participants were recruited from a pool of federal employees that work in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming. The research sample consisted of has approximately 121 employees that may have received the survey upon approval from Nova Southeastern University. Participants were employees of all levels, which may have included supervisors and managers. Their identities and responses were made anonymous. Participation criteria were full time federal employees with minimum of five years employment, between the ages 25 and 60. Males and females participated. A non-probability approach and purposeful sampling method, commonly used in qualitative

methods may suggest a careful selection to assure the validity of the phenomenon studied (Wester, 2011). Plopa, Plopa and Skuzinska (2017) reported on the importance of protecting anonymity of respondents to reduce apprehension. The authors noted that questionnaires are a type of inclusive research that moves away from a focus about people to research that includes them. Sampling was data saturation of 10 to 20 participants. In a qualitative study, 20 participants or more was suggested by Boddy (2016) was helpful in building and maintaining trust when exchanging information in a formal study. Sampling of data saturation in this qualitative study was not to be confused with sample size, a quantitative component. This researcher has conducted purposeful sampling with the intent of investigating if bullying is being addressed in the workplace. This could be helpful in mitigating some of the inherent biases and threats to the integrity of qualitative studies. An anonymous survey questionnaire on the SurveyMonkey platform has been sent via email directly to the population of federal workers under study. Names of participants were not requested in compliance with union regulation; instead, a random code was assigned to each response. Consent was obtained by a question at the beginning of the survey, with non-consent ending at that juncture. The participant did not have the ability to proceed to Question 2 if consent was withheld.

Data Collection Tools

The survey was a researcher developed instrument (see Appendix) that asked open-ended questions about the participants' experience with workplace bullying. The participants wrote their responses and used their own words. The instrument consisted of questions derived from empirical research. The instrument contained multiple demographic seeking questions. The survey was designed to answer the two research

questions. Participants gained access to the survey by a link that the researcher provided to the SurveyMonkey platform. SurveyMonkey was a confidential, third party online platform used to disseminate surveys easily to collect data.

The first question of the survey was the Consent Form. Upon the acceptance of the informed consent form, the survey was made available for participation; non-consent resulted in the unavailability of the survey. In other words, a response of “no” to Question 1 on the online survey prevented a participant access to the remainder of the survey.

Procedures

The procedures that were used in this qualitative narrative inquiry were achieved through a series of steps.

- Step 1 acquired written approval to conduct this research from the Nova Southeastern University and the Director of Contracting.
- Step 2 recruited participants by electronic transmission to a mail group of federal employees in the states of Colorado, Montana, Oklahoma, and Wyoming as directed by the Director of Contracting.
- Step 3 required informed consent in Question 1 of the electronically transmitted survey and required the participant’s agreement to participate before proceeding.
- Step 4 was the organization of data using Microsoft Excel, which also included the analyzing and coding of findings. The researcher assigned a random code to each response output from the survey.
- Step 5, the final step, was preparing and presenting findings and

recommendations by using a narrative or story format. Green (2013) reported that the method of narrative was valued in human sciences by researchers. The author noted that listening, telling, and exploring life experiences was part of the appeal and that perception in this type of research may be designed easily, lived out, thought about, and represented in a story format.

Geale (2012) discussed the ethical responsibility researchers had in protecting the interests of participants. The author reported on the Ethical Theory of social issues, economics, and politics involved in research; the researcher must respect autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality of research participants. This researcher was committed to protecting the trust of participants in this qualitative study in accordance with the Belmont Principles. An anonymous survey was administered through a known, secure, and trusted site, SurveyMonkey. Confidentiality was maintained according to the rules of Nova Southeastern University's Code of Ethics.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an analytic summary of raw data that has been transformed into useful information (Chowdbury, 2015). The data collected was detailed responses that describe workplace bullying. A qualitative narrative inquiry was used to interpret the data provided and explore similar themes to help the researcher in understanding the perspectives that federal workers experienced with workplace bullying (Hoque, Covaleski, & Gooneratne, 2015). Once the surveys were completed, the researcher used Microsoft Excel to sort the material by a topic, theme, or situation. Chowdbury (2015) noted that a qualitative researcher followed a holistic, interpretive approach through Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). The premise of the QDA approach was that the

existence and nature of phenomena in the social world depended on people's subjective awareness and understanding. The author added that QDA was an interpretive, analytical, and inductive strategy used to examine meaningful qualitative data, and to gather an in-depth comprehension of human behavior to explain and justify the claims of the study.

The researcher read and organized the responses by compiling a list of topics and combined common themes. The researcher looked for themes until data saturation occurred; when there are no new themes, phrases, or topics, and the information appeared repetitive. Data saturation was utilized to discover the number of participants in similar themes throughout interviews. Finally, the researcher arranged data for each category and perform a preliminary analysis, documented all commonalities within the responses and put them into separated categories by bracketing.

Bracketing and triangulation. Chan, Fung and Chien (2013) explained that bracketing was a method of analysis validating credibility, requiring control of potential bias of the researcher. Bias of the researcher neither influenced the collection nor analysis of participants' responses. In bracketing, the researcher was required to dispel personal beliefs and knowledge about the phenomenon prior to and throughout the investigation. Having engaged in bracketing, this researcher diligently focused to set aside or dispel personal knowledge, values, experience and beliefs, eliminated bias and gave true, accurate descriptions of respondents' experiences.

Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, and Ponterotto (2017) stated that trustworthiness and integrity of a qualitative study could be accomplished through two processes: (a) the researcher-maintained faithfulness to the phenomenon being studied and (b) the researcher's adherence to the specified procedures of the methodological

process of research design. This researcher has identified and was committed to the five steps that were followed in collection of data.

Foster and Urquhart (2012) explained that transferability occurred when a model that utilized coding of one set of data is transferable and enabled the data to be tested in another investigative situation. The open-ended questions utilized in the anonymous survey of this research study were designed to capture the workplace bullying perspectives and experiences of U.S. federal employees, and to allow other researchers to conduct studies investigating workplace bullying.

Dependability through triangulation for synthesis established an audit trail that was approved as specific software programs were technologically available to assist in identifying common themes (Chowdhury, 2015). Chowdhury (2015) discussed NVivo, Excel, and other software as a means of efficiently managing data that was not numerical, with capability to map, categorize, and identify common themes for comparing data in analysis to be more easily interpreted. The author also discussed confirmability by the researcher's ability to check and re-check data for reliability. Excel 2016 accommodated the availability of data to be read, interpreted, confirmed, compared, identified, and recorded. This researcher utilized such protocol in the current study.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2011) suggested that ethical considerations should always be discussed when completing a study about human subjects. Potential participants were provided an informed consent form to participate in the survey through a third-party portal, SurveyMonkey, prior to accessing the survey. Background information on the study and the researcher's name and contact information were provided on the informed consent

form. This qualitative study was sent to a mail group of approximately 121 anonymous federal employees; therefore, personally identifying information were not used in this study. The researcher and a third-party analyzer organized the anonymous responses. Petersen, Allman, and Lee (2015) argued that respondents were put at ease with anonymity and felt free to share sensitive information.

There were minimal risks to participants in this anonymous, qualitative survey. Benefits associated with the results were expected to be in the favor of all parties involved, included the respondents and the organizations to which they belong. The researcher was being mindful of controlling researcher bias through the use of bracketing. The researcher securely stored all the password protected documents saved on the computer's hard drive for 3 years. At the end of the 3 years, the disks were destroyed.

Two concepts and measurement approaches regarding trustworthiness have surfaced over the years. The first is that there was an expectation that a person, known or unknown, performed a specific course of action. In measurement studies, questions were asked with the anticipation of obtaining specific outcomes (Neumann, 2016). The author further relayed that in experimental studies, behavior to test trust may not be rewarded with the trustor's faith by the trustee as expected. Ineciu (2012) pointed out that academic journals that were well developed provided researches value in knowledge. In a qualitative analysis, data collected in journals have helped researchers gain prestige in education, economics, management, and other fields.

Trustworthiness

This section should demonstrate aspects of the study's validity and reliability. Why should your study be trusted? Check the accuracy of your findings and

interpretation by including the following: (a) member checking—asking members to check the accuracy of the account and (b) triangulation—using corroborating evidence.

Potential Researcher Bias

The researcher was mindful of suppressing personal emotions that could have arisen during researching workplace bullying, for the subject matter was one that could have exposed the emotions of a human being. To increase the researcher's awareness and enable her to share the prevalence of the phenomenon to leaders throughout the workplace for reducing or eliminating workplace bullying, she will continue her education on the topic by reviewing scholarly journals and secondary resources (Newson, 2013). The researcher has more than 6-years' experience in the current field and is aware that the phenomenon of workplace bullying exists. The researcher did not have personal contact with participants as the survey was transmitted and received electronically. Therefore, neither opinions nor knowledge of the researcher were shared with participants, protecting both, researcher and participants from external influence. Participants were informed on the consent form of confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of information provided to the researcher; confidential identifiers were used in the study and not names to protect their privacy.

Chapter 4: Findings

The problem that was explored is the high amount of bullying in federal government offices. Vickers (2014) identified that workplace bullying causes excessive absenteeism, employee turnover, higher no-shows, lower production, and a lack of morale, loyalty, and commitment to the organization. Vickers further argued that there is no clear definition of workplace bullying, nor a policy to address non-tolerance and consequences. Workplace bullying research, although limited, has routinely focused on poor leadership, abuse from supervisors, and the engagement of inappropriate and harmful behaviors (Lui, Zhang, Hao, & Mao, 2016). The study included an anonymous survey that was researcher developed and asked open-ended questions that participants completed in their words. The findings were coded, categorized by common themes, and presented in a narrative format.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of data gathered from a pool of federal employees on multiple levels ranging from interns to upper management on perspectives of workplace bullying. The analysis included collection, coding, emergent themes, results, findings, and summary.

This study was guided utilizing the following research questions:

- 1: What techniques or training do employees note or recommend to reduce incidents of bullying?
- 2: What are the local federal office employees' perceptions of how bullying cases are handled?

Data Collection

Approval from Nova Southeastern University's IRB and the organization's

administrator were granted to initiate the survey. Petty et al. (2012) pointed out that data collection for qualitative research can include multiple approaches such as interviews, observations, and written documents. The data were collected through an anonymous qualitative survey distributed by the administrator to an email group to maintain anonymity using a link provided by the researcher from SurveyMonkey. The survey took each participant approximately 9 minutes to complete; 32 participants responded. Upon completion of the survey the responses were then downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for further protection, description, and coding.

Data Protection

After receiving consent to participate in the study from the anonymous consent form each participant's responses were de-identified by assigning an alphanumeric code. Disclosure was provided to the participants on the anonymous consent form that all responses would be stored on a password protected computer for three years, then permanently deleted and removed from the hard drive.

Description of the Sample

Demographics of the 34 participants were 15 males, 44% and 19 females, 56%. Races are Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Bi-Racial, American Indian, and Other. Ages range from 25 to 60. Federal employees only were invited to participate. In total there were 34 participants, however only 32 completed the entire survey. There were two participants which only completed the demographics portion. Due to the lack of information they were excluded from the study. There were 32 participants who completed the anonymous survey. The participants' identities were protected through an assigned alphanumeric code, Participant Number 1 (PN1) through Participant Number 32 (PN32). (See Table 9.)

Table 9

Study Participant Demographics

Participant #	Race	Gender	Yr. of Birth
PN1	African American	F	1957
PN2	Caucasian	M	1961
PN3	Caucasian	F	1953
PN4	African American	M	1976
PN5	Caucasian	M	1978
PN6	Caucasian	F	1967
PN7	African American	M	1970
PN8	Hispanic	M	1952
PN9	African American	M	1972
PN10	Caucasian	F	1957
PN11	African American	M	1966
PN12	Caucasian	M	1959
PN13	African American	M	1969
PN14	Other	F	1966
PN15	American Indian	F	1959
PN16	Hispanic	F	1969
PN17	Other	M	NR
PN18	African American	F	1964
PN19	Caucasian	F	1988
PN20	Caucasian	M	1965
PN21	Caucasian	M	1960
PN22	Caucasian	M	1963
PN23	Caucasian	F	1951
PN24	Caucasian	F	1959
PN25	Caucasian	F	1974
PN26	Caucasian	M	1968
PN27	Bi-Racial	M	1970
PN28	Caucasian	F	1972
PN29	Caucasian	F	1970
PN30	Caucasian	F	1987
PN31	Bi-Racial	F	1978
PN32	Caucasian	F	1986

*NR= not reported

Data Presentation

Coding process. Open coding (Korsgaard, 2013), the coding process in this qualitative narrative inquiry was achieved through one of five steps. Andersen, Handstad,

and Day (2013) described open coding as a process of identifying common words or phrases repeated by the majority of participants' responses from the qualitative survey. Step 1 was the download of responses from SurveyMonkey onto an Excel spreadsheet. Step 2 was the implementation of open coding. The researcher began highlighting in Excel using different colors to identify common words in responses to establish categories, as Andersen et al. (2013) described using open coding. The use of open coding resulted in both, identifying common words and phrases repeated by participants into categories, and the emergence of common themes through the use of the identified common words. Step 3 was listing identified categories, which included whether the participant was either a victim, witness or neither. Step 4 was printing the questions from SurveyMonkey. Step 5 was identifying responses in the cells within the spreadsheet which were then matched to each question number (i.e. Question 5 in cell F); then, the responses were synthesized with the questions and cells to align with each category representing the processes, actions, and statements of participants within the survey group. Once coded the responses were compared to each response and new categories were developed, and additional clustering, merging of phrases and eliminating categories that were not necessary for the analysis. The coding in this study is a mixture of all the above. Following the synthesizing of questions to responses, the three themes of threatened or intimidated, trust, and training emerged.

Emergent Themes

Employees' perceptions of workplace bullying emerged in three categories of workplace bullying by this study as common in this meaningful learning experience. There were perceptions in the categories of being threatened or intimidated, trust, and

training. Threatened or intimidated responses from Questions 5-10, 15-16, and 18- 20. Trust – Questions 11, 12, and 17. Training from Questions 13- 14. The survey responses revealed that some participants had previously left their job or currently feel the need to leave, training on bullying is needed, and there is lack of trust for leadership in the workplace.

Primary Theme 1: Threatened or Intimidated

Point of view of victims. The following results related to responses from victims. Question 5 asked, “have you been a target of workplace bullying?” Responses on threatened or intimidated were affirmed responses from 10 participants to targets of bullying responded ”yes”, 16 ”no”, and 6 refused to answer. Question 6 asked if so, can you describe the situation? i.e. who was involved - a supervisor, peer, or someone else? PN1 responded, “Supervisor.” PN7 responded, “A peer who is also a supervisor. Threatened me in a meeting because I proved he was lying about a situation. Also said all of us supervisors are beneath him.” PN14 responded, “A Branch Chief other than mine.” PN17 responded, “Screaming and yelling at me by a supervisor. I didn’t do what was yelled about. It wasn’t me, and he knew I couldn’t have even done it, but I got blamed and screamed at about it anyway.”

Question 8 asked if so, what was the outcome? PN3 responded, “I have two active EEO complaints which have not settled yet.” PN23 responded, “it was not believed.” PN25 responded, “The employee was told to stop, and when it continued HR intervention occurred. However, her move to another department was halted during an appeal process. The bullying continued until I left the department for my current position.” PN32 responded, “No outcome. Nothing happened after reporting.”

Question 9 asked how long did the bullying last? PN7 responded, "Off and on for about a year he is still bullying others." PN17 responded, "Still happens, I never know when it's next." PN29 responded, "1 year." PN32 responded, "The first instance lasted 2 months and the second instance is still ongoing and has been for about one month."

Question 10 asked is it ongoing? The responses were 5 yes, 10 no, and 17 refused to answer.

Point of view of witnesses. The following responses came from someone that saw or heard the bullying but was not the intended person being bullied. Question 15 asked have you been a witness to workplace bullying? Question 16 asked if so, what action, if any did you take? PN3 responded, "In one case, I tried to interfere on on behalf of the victim and was rebuffed by the Responsible Management Official. In two other cases, I could not do anything for the victims, except to empathize. In another case, I advised the victim about how to bring it to the attention of the union, the Office of Special counsel. There are incidents of bullying going on in the office I work in now and all I can do is to advise the victims about how to bring them to the attention of the union, the EEO and the Office of Special Counsel." PN7 responded, "I spoke to the individual and then reported it." PN10 responded, "None at the time but after leaving I reported a lot to the IG." PN19 responded, "Assisted employee write up/document the incidents."

Question 17 asked did you witness workplace bullying immediately upon being employed at the workplace, or some other time after starting work there? PN3 responded, "I witnessed bullying within a couple of months of being employed by this agency." PN10 responded, "Not until after about a year when there was a turnover in the supervisor who was not professional with her team leads and other staff as well. There

was favoritism and blatant sexism and bullying. I was a favorite until I stood up for what was right shortly afterwards. I have not experienced anything like it before or since.”

PN17 responded, “Both.” PN29 responded, “My situation - Just a few months after I started.” Question 18 asked if so, how has the experience affected your perspective of the workplace? PN3 responded, “I don’t feel safe. Having witnessed supervisors and directors perjure themselves to investigators, I know that management will go to any lengths to avoid having to take responsibility for the damage they inflict on their victims.” PN17 responded, “Where I work is not a happy place. It’s scary, and anyone not in favor wonders when they’re next to get publicly humiliated.” PN30 responded, “I feel that this organization does not care about the well-being of its employees.” PN32 responded, “I feel this is a cold and unwelcoming workplace.” Question 19 asked, “are you currently witnessing workplace bullying in your immediate area or any other area of the workplace?” The responses were 5 “yes”, 26 “no”, and 1 refused to answer. Question 20 asked, “Explain if and how you have been affected as a witness of workplace bullying?”

PN3 responded, “As I mentioned earlier, I don’t feel safe. I am suspicious of management. I know that the director and the rest of upper management have ulterior motives.” PN17 responded, “Yes. I wait to have it happen to me, or someone else. it’s not fun. There’s nothing done to stop it, and those who argue get ignored, bad reviews or fired.” PN23 responded, “I was given veiled threats.” PN32 responded, “I felt confused. the instance that I witnessed was in front of a crowd, including supervisors and leadership, yet no one said anything.”

Primary Theme 2: Trust

Question 11 asked, “how, if it at all was your work performance affected by workplace bullying?” PN3 responded, “I continued to do my work under great duress, putting in a lot of unpaid overtime to get it done. (I did not claim the overtime).” PN14 responded, “Unable to fully concentrate, fearful.” PN17 responded, “There’s no trust. I sit on eggshells every day, wondering if it’ll happen again today. I never know when something will set it off, and no one does anything. I don’t know what will set him off. It can be something I have nothing to do with or even what I do right, but he doesn’t agree with, and I still get yelled at. I fear for my job, and I don’t want to get yelled at again.” PN32 responded, “My work is adversely impacted: lack of lack ability to concentrate, fear of reprimanding.” Question 12 stated, “describe how you feel regarding how these cases are handled.” PN3 responded, U.S. government agencies run their own EEO programs, so that means that agency employees run EEO programs in which other agency employees are involved. This is a huge conflict of interest. The agency I work for is more interested in protecting the bullies from me than in protecting me from the bullies.”

PN9 responded “Management sweeps them under the rug.” PN10 responded, “When I was a witness to workplace bullying, I felt it was handled very poorly. Nothing happened to the bully and our office was instructed that if you are not threatened with or the victim of violence, it is not an unsafe or hostile workplace.” PN17 responded, “No one does anything about it. It’s public, it’s done to me and others. Public insults in meetings, or we can hear him yelling at others. In meetings, people laugh because they’re afraid they’re next, or afraid not to. The one in charge doesn’t have to worry because no one over him is here. Little hope of change, everyone is on USA Jobs looking for

somewhere else.”

Primary Theme 3: Training

Question 13 asked, “what training is currently in place to reduce incidents of workplace bullying?” PN3 responded, “No F.E.A.R. It is useless, though. It is just a panacea and has no real value. Bullying in this government agency is alive and well and growing.” PN4 responded, “There is training that talks about various types of harassment and hostile work environment, but don’t remember workplace bullying.” PN10 responded, “Online training on preventing harassment in the workplace is required annually. Most people just click through the training and it hasn’t changed in years despite changes in workplace demographics and technology.” PN32 responded, “I haven’t heard of any training, so I would say None.”

Question 14 asked, “What trainings would you like to be provided to reduce incidents of workplace bullying?” PN1 responded, “Training on bullying.” PN6 responded, “maybe something like Franklin Covey offers for how to deal with conflict.” PN8 responded, “We need more direct training on bullying, not just covered as a side topic. We also need statistics on workplace bullying to convince training participants of the seriousness.” PN31 responded, “Some training should be provided concerning who do we contact? what should we do? what are the procedures on bullying in the workplace?”

This section provides a review of the findings of the study after the coding, clustering, and identification of themes from the survey responses. The primary themes revealed from the study identified threatened or intimidated, trust, and training as common concerns of participants. Responses were clustered into categories from

repeated use of words identifying the behaviors or need for intervention.

This study was guided utilizing the following research questions. Research question 1 asked, “What techniques or training do employees note or recommend to reduce incidents of bullying?” The data analysis yielded three major themes. The themes were threatened or intimidated, trust, and training. These themes played a significant part in identifying federal employees’ perception that workplace bullying exists and help reducing or eliminating the phenomenon is desired.

PN3 responded, “No amount of training will do anything to stop the bullying. The only training that should be given is how to identify bullies. When the legal limitations on the amount government agencies have to pay the victim are lifted, and the agencies have to pay huge settlements to the victims of bullying, the taxpayers will start giving their representatives an earful and Congress will enact legislation imposing severe penalties on agencies and agency employees who continue bullying. this is the only solution.” PN5 responded, “A ‘’ course could provide the info.” PN7 responded, “In person trainings.” PN10 responded, “Onsite training using real scenarios faced in the workplace today.” PN 14 responded, “All that apply to this issue.” PN15 responded, “Have a great speaker come in and discuss it in detail which may assist employees who are dealing with bullying issues.” PN18 responded, “More true examples of workplace bullying to read on actual cases and all the outcomes.” PN19 responded “In person, how to deal with difficult people, etc.” PN22 responded, “Training to describe what is bullying and what is counseling (i.e. supervisors discussing substandard performance).”

PN24 responded, “Upper management training...I have heard some rumors of bullying...or employees felt they were being bullied by managers...we all just want to be

treated equal!” PN25 responded, “Face to face trainings, to expand on the definition of workplace bullying and ALL actions in which an employee can take to resolve.” PN29 responded, “Senior Management Training!” PN30 responded, “I would like supervision to be held more accountable and complete separate training.” PN32 responded, “Awareness training.”

Research Question 2 asked, “What are the local federal office employees’ perceptions of how bullying cases are handled?” PN1 responded, “They are not handled.” PN6 responded, “I sometimes feel that bullying of employees by supervisors are ignored by management. that they consider that the employee is just complaining and whining.” PN7 responded, “Horrible more should be done.” PN25 responded, “Frustrated, as no real action was taken to protect my rights to work in a non-hostile environment.” PN26 responded, “Don’t know how they are handled.” PN29 responded, “Physically sick.” PN30 responded, “I did talk to their supervisor, but nothing was done. This person continues to belittle and berate people. While some may not feel this is bullying, I feel that people in power should be held to a higher standard.” PN32 responded, “I feel as though nothing was done.”

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility. The researcher remained mindful of the potential for bias. The potential was dispelled using bracketing (Chan et al., 2013) for credibility throughout this investigative study. Researcher bias has neither influenced the collection nor analysis of responses from participants. The researcher’s knowledge, values, experiences, and beliefs were set-aside; a true and accurate description of participants’ experiences have been collected and recorded. The researcher followed two processes for trustworthiness

pointed out by Levitt et al. (2017) by (a) remained faithful to the phenomenon of the study and (b) maintained methodology process procedures specified in the research design.

Transferability. The researcher utilized an alphanumeric coding process of the data which may allow transferability of this model to be duplicated in a future investigative study (Foster & Urquhart, 2012). Other researchers may conduct studies with the use of an anonymous qualitative survey questionnaire. The open-ended questions in the anonymous survey were designed to capture workplace bullying experiences and perceptions of federal employees in the U.S., and future researchers may study and investigate workplace bullying.

Dependability. De Smet and Mention (2011) pointed out that triangulation occurs upon the review of data from three separate sources. In this study triangulation was achieved through the review of survey responses of a purposeful sample population, policies and procedures of the study organization that address laws on harassment and other behaviors, and the researcher journal notes. Collected data from participants established validity and an audit trail through triangulation for synthesis (Chowdbury, 2015).

Confirmability. Excel software accommodated reading, interpreting, confirming, comparing, identifying, and recording of the available data (Chowdbury, 2015). Confirmability was achieved through the researcher having the ability to check data multiple times with the use of software for reliability. Neither monetary nor other form of award was offered to participants.

Summary of the Findings

This chapter covered the perceptions of federal government employees on the phenomenon of workplace bullying and the need to reduce or eliminate the occurrence for a healthy and more productive workforce. Chapter 5 includes a summary and discussion of results, limitations, and implications of the study, conclusions, recommendations for further research, and a chapter summary.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Workplace bullying is a phenomenon that had gotten little attention in years past although it was present in workplaces across the globe (Rai & Agarul, 2016).

Appelbaum, Semerjian, and Mohan (2012) reported that bullying, like other forms of abuse caused destruction in organizational bodies as illnesses and diseases caused in human bodies. The authors further reported sickness or disease may be treated or cured, and workplace bullying, when exposed is no different with the proper tools in place to combat it.

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to get the perceptions of federal government employees in a western agency on ways to reduce workplace bullying. McLaughlin (2014) argued that bullied workers quit their jobs more often; are stressed at work, unhappy, and less committed to the workplace. Often, the bullied worker's recourse is to quit, as little is done due to the limitations within the law against workplace bullying. This researcher investigated through an anonymous survey whether bullying is addressed through policies or laws, and the need, if any for training. The anonymous survey was sent to a pool of federal government employees that consisted of managers, supervisors, and non-managers, non-supervisors. This study explored ways of curing or treating the phenomenon. The research questions were developed from the philosophy of empowerment and catastrophe theories, for possible discernment of abused power enforcement and the destructive path workplace bullying may have left. This study addresses how the organization and its employees may have been affected in their words.

Findings and Interpretations

The findings in this qualitative narrative study revealed that employees perceive

the prevalence of workplace bullying is occurring, align with what Godkin (2015) confirmed, that bullying incidents continue to rise in organizations. Organizations are impacted negatively by the spread of workplace bullying, as Toland (2012) documented that victims in various industries were paid court judgments or settlements out of court monies ranging from \$1.8 million to \$168 million.

This study responses portrayed how participants perceive that workplace bullying occurs openly or is not hidden in the federal workplace as expressed by responses on the survey as witnesses. Participants expressed being negatively impacted by witnessing bad treatment of colleagues without the ability to help or stop it. Witness participants expressed feeling “unsafe”, “humiliated”, “confused”, and “ignored”. Witnesses further expressed feeling that the workplace was “unwelcoming” and “scary”. The witness’s responses align with what Perminiene, Kern, and Perminas (2017) communicated, that one of the leading causes of stress in the workplace may be bullying, linked to multiple health issues such as fatigue, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), insomnia, headaches, and many others. The authors’ findings were in alignment with the survey results.; the bully taking charge although may not be in charge, seeking recognition or exposure at others’ expense, and unwilling to solve conflicts aligns with the participants’ responses. In contrast, the authors pointed out individuals willing to simply go along, be seen and not heard, and avoid conflicts are akin to being victims who have bullied.

Participant responses conveyed a lack of trust between workers and management. Gockel, Robertson, and Braumer categorized organizations as receptacles of multiple layers or levels. The levels were individual, team, and organization. The authors pointed

out the importance of sharing knowledge and information between the levels, developing and maintaining trust, as they, the levels, are interdependent in achieving job satisfaction. Participants' responses align with the authors' report.

Participants' expressed perceptions included some of the following. PN 17 "There's no trust....I fear for my job", PN 32, "My work is adversely impacted." Participants expressed a lack of trust in how workplace bullying cases are handled, perceived as PN9, "Management sweeps them under the rug", PN 10, "...I felt it was handled very poorly", and PN 3, "...The agency I work for is more interested in protecting the bullies from me than in protecting me from the bullies."

This researcher correlated participants' perception with a need for Covey's concept of Leading with Trust. The authors pointed out that when trust is established, people are more willing to seek out knowledge and information and share it. Sharing knowledge and information between teammates and management, management and team will move the organization forward, and job satisfaction will be positively impacted.

Participants of this research study communicated the need and desire for training with responses of PN25, "Face to face trainings, to expand on the definition of workplace bullying and ALL actions in which an employee can take to resolve." and PN15, "Have a great speaker come in and discuss it in detail which may assist employees who are dealing with bullying issues." Fleming (2016) confirmed that research has validated employees, managers, and employers need to better train in workplace bullying, conflicts, and other destructive behaviors. The author communicated that attention is growing on a relatively new concept, Emotional Intelligence (EI). EI is an individual's ability to recognize, assess, and communicate emotions, an important attribute necessary in

creating a healthy environment in the workplace.

Laws

This researcher depicted participants' consensus on the need for policies and laws to address bullying, which is not clearly defined (Anderson, 2011) and Summers (2012), separate and apart from other behaviors that are currently defined, such as harassment. There are no laws in the U.S. addressing bullying (Indvik & Johnson, 2012), cases of bullying are currently filed as harassment or discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pritam, 2010). Participants expressed disdain for the way cases are handled, responded PN3, "I have two active EEO complaints which have not settled yet." and PN3 also responded, "U.S. government agencies run their own EEO programs, so that means that agency employees run EEO programs in which other agency employees are involved. This is a huge conflict of interest. The agency I work for is more interested in protecting the bullies from me than in protecting me from the bullies." There are currently no laws in the U.S. to address bullying in the workplace. Wall, Smith, and Nodoushani (2017) pointed out that awareness of workplace bullying has continued to grow, a major risk for employees and employers. The authors proposed the need to supplement existing policies and law to stronger govern against related behaviors of harassment and discrimination to make the workplace more healthy and productive.

Relationship of Findings to the Literature

Literature has documented the prevalence of workplace bullying, dating back to the 1800's child fable, *Oliver Twist* (Donegan, 2012); however, the author stated it was first reported by The London times in 1862 and first reported in the U.S. in 1978. Literature identified the continued growth of bullying in the workplace (Stagg, Sheridan,

& Daniel, 2010), supported, as communicated by Rai and Argarwal (2016), in that little bullies on the schoolyard grow into big bullies in the workplace. Specific traits of bullying have been documented by Drach-Zahavy and Trogan (2013) as workers were threatened, inappropriately touched, and ignored. Anderson (2011) noted intimidation as a term related to bullying. The study responses revealed participants' feelings of having been intimidated.

This study researcher has documented the prevalence of workplace bullying in this federal government agency. Employees of the study agency expressed traits of bullying described by literature of being threatened, inappropriately touched, and ignored. The study showed, as indicated by Lewis and Lewis (2014) that employees are affected mentally and physically by bullying and it affects performance and productivity of the organization. WBI reported 19% of U.S. adults were bullied at work in a 2017 survey and 10 of 32 participants of this study were bullied, which represented 25% of the 121 surveyed.

Recommendations for Local Practice

This study responses revealed opportunities for organizational improvement of relationships between employees and leadership and peer to peer relations. As a leading employing agency of the executive branch, hundreds of thousands of lives are affected by the policies and laws of employment. Employees' families are directly affected when bullying has caused anxiety or depression of their loved one. Responses showed a focus of leadership on output or production and not on relationships, which opens a door for bullying behaviors to surface. There was an outcry from participant responses for change in the organization, for trust of leadership showed lacking. This researcher experienced

the importance of leading by trust, a characteristic participant viewed as missing between parties. Employees categorized them being dictated to as management and supervisors were not trusting them; therefore, managers and supervisor were not trusted. The resulted feelings left were described as fear and duress. This researcher recommended an examination of the organization's culture, an important component of the way things function and the treatment of employees.

Participant responses indicated the need for development of a training program beginning with ways of identifying bullies to legal limits of payouts resulting from bullying, and consequences of bullying for perpetrators. In-person trainings were desired versus online. Participants suggested scenario-based examples relevant to real life workplace bullying, including outcomes. Training was requested on dealing with difficult people and conflicts. Participants pointed out confusion between being bullied or by being counseled by a supervisor, as there seemed a thin line between the actions experienced. Management and supervisor training was requested, and some participants communicated the training should be done separately. Improved reinforced accountability of managers and supervisor actions were noted missing in how cases were handled. Employees wrote that bullying is not handled, and incidents were ignored; they, the employees were categorized as whiners and complainers. Hernandez (2017) pointed out the labor union may be a resource for agency employees, it may be one of several sources available; therefore, the researcher has recommended more diligence in getting pertinent information disseminated throughout the organization.

The Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 (White, 2014), assured a right to work in a safe place for U.S. workers, but participants sized-up feelings of helplessness.

Frustration was mentioned at an all-time high for victims and witnesses, which constructed the need for emotional intelligence training, confirming the reported study of Doe, Ndinguri, and Phipps (2015). Participants related to having adapted to being dictated to and not being requested to do their jobs. That translated as the employees were held to a higher standard than managers and supervisors. Participants specified the need for the standard to be raised for management and supervisors.

The study findings confirmed that bullying was still taking place in the workplace. Employees were aware of bad treatment of managers and supervisors toward employees and peers toward one another. There was expressed remorse from witnesses for victims of bullying since they, the witnesses were not knowledgeable on the process in place for help. Queried participants lacked the power of reporting incidents documented having reported to an outside agency later, after leaving the agency of occurrence.

Literature showed workplace bullying has affected the health of victims and witnesses, reported (Lweis & Lewis, 2014; Nica, Hurjui, & Stefan, 2016), and participants expressed physical feelings of sickness. Public humiliation, a possible culprit for physical sickness (Devonish, 2014) was correlated as the way participants expressed at some time or juncture felt. Managerial motives (Hodgins, MacCurtain, & Mannix-McNamara, 2014) were outlined in employees' perceptions as division amongst the ranks. In other words, participant responses differentiated them from us, not we. Motives of managers and supervisors were summarized as being contentious.

Wall et al. (2017) pointed out that organizations, like people, evolve through stages of development and growth, or the lack of, for better or worse. Participant

responses reflected willingness to communicate through open dialogue between employees and leadership to become educated about workplace bullying, the need for policies and laws to handle cases, and the desire for a safe, healthy workplace, an opportunity for change to take place. The opportunity for building relationships emerged through responses that expressed trust is missing. Federal government employees have been holders of public trust of the American people, and this study's findings diagnosed an opportunity for this organization to grow in the public sector.

Recommendations for Future Research

Bullying, in this study, has been identified as having progressive characteristics. Giorgi et.al (2015) explained that conflict is a characteristic that if left unresolved could escalate into more serious and violent behaviors. Another characteristic is that bullying is non-discriminative; it occurs person to person and organization to organization. Conflict management and resolution are areas that should be researched together in relation to workplace bullying. Responses revealed poor relationships between leadership and employees; therefore, this researcher recommends relationship building for future research. Relationship building has been explained by Vayryen and Laari-Salmela (2018) as including the examination of employees' perception of the organization's ethical culture or climate. The authors encouraged the examination of trustworthiness within the organization, humanization or dehumanization of employees for violations, if any. The authors reported that when employees perceive to be dehumanized, the treatment is equated to that of animals, and erodes benevolence, integrity, and trust. This researcher recommends research of case studies involving organizational collaborative activities of the workplace setting, specifically on the acceptance of employees from management's

intentions of improving relationships, not focused on production only.

Lack of trust was also revealed in responses, another area recommended for future research would be leading by trust. The workplace is changing with the entrance of millennials, deemed as Generations X, Y, and Z, the generations after Baby Boomers. Thomas, Kavya, and Monica (2018) explained that as technology is prevalent in the workplace and daily lives of workers, millennials differ greatly previous generations when it comes to trust. The authors reported that millennials are less trusting than previous generations. Technology has brought the world to the hands of millennials in a way that was not available to previous generations, and social media plays a major role in developing trust. This researcher recommends future researchers explore how millennials view trust in workplace settings by focus group interviews.

Responses revealed the need for training to identify bullies; policies need to be formulated specifically towards bullying separate and apart from other behaviors such as harassment. The need for training on conflict resolution and dealing with difficult people was also revealed in responses. Tomkowica and Florentino (2017) conducted a study on workplace bullying in relation to harassment, as law addresses the behavior. The authors reported the perception or experience of harassment behaviors were not inherent links to protected classes of Title VII, age, sex, race, nor the ADA class for disability. The authors reported, results ranged widely in rationales and motivations behind workplace bullying behaviors. The authors mentioned the Faragher Model, balancing the obligations of employees and employers in workplace harassment claims. This researcher's final recommendation for future research is the Faragher Model for a future study of data from a larger population to show a better way claims may address behaviors categorized for

more specific behaviors, not under something different from what the behavior actually is, workplace bullying is an abuse of power, harassment involves other behaviors.

Limitations

The nature of this study suggested that the research was conducted within the researcher's current workplace. However, due to the nature of the work at the federal level, the study was limited to a qualitative online survey and not personal or phone interviews. The researcher did not have the ability to observe respondents' nonverbal behavior, listen to tone of voice, or ask additional or follow up questions after participants' responses have been provided.

The researcher encountered multiple limitations in conducting this qualitative study. The first limitation was in recruiting for the anonymous qualitative survey and maintaining anonymity in lieu of conducting interviews in person or by telephone. The federal government has a union for employees and attaining union consent for interviews could take an undetermined amount of time, which posed a challenge in the researcher's ability to complete the requirement for graduation in a timely manner.

Another limitation may result from respondents being unwilling to participate or be completely truthful due to the nature of the study. A second limitation for the researcher was that data were collected through a written qualitative survey, not personal interviews of participants. Creswell (2011) pointed out an advantage of interviews could be a researcher's ability to observe interviewees' body language, and demeanor through personal interviews or hear their tone on telephone interviews

A third limitation was that Nova Southeastern University required organizational approval of the survey prior to distribution, which may have created potential exposure to

intervention prior to survey distribution. Protocol procedures implemented prior to distribution may have altered participants' responses.

Last, this analysis is based, in part, on the existing literature, which is minimal and may not reflect the broader realities of the effects workplace bullying has at the federal level. Lysaght, Kranenburg, Armstrong, and Krupa (2016) noted that there may be resistance to research probing into practices, beliefs, and policies of employment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The researcher concluded that the U.S. federal government has evolved as leader of the free world and is looked up to from outside the country; however, this study showed that differs within its borders. As a world leader, the federal government has a responsibility to lead its own first. Bullying has been categorized as a form of harassment capable of leading to a hostile work environment. Research showed there is no clear definition for bullying. Krouse and Grind (2017) referred to it as workplace conduct for complaints exposed against bullying and sexual harassment. Mattice and Lucas (2017) reported an increase of complaints filed with the EEOC steadily each year. The authors confirmed, as this study showed, (a) managers were insufficiently trained and accountable, (b) employees' work experiences transferred into homes and communities, and (c) performance and production directly reflected an individual's emotional state at work, whether happy or unhappy. Mindfulness training was conducted in Canada at two work places (PR Newswire, 2017). The study results linked employees' poor mental health to workplace bullying. After 30 days of the training, positive results were reported that the employees experienced less stress, better performance, and were more resilient.

Training was highlighted in this study and desired by and recommended for all

employees. Managers and supervisors may achieve reducing or eliminating workplace bullying with specific training on the phenomenon. Woodrow (2017) agreed that leadership roles in bullying are complex and it's imperative for organizations to explore ways to deal with bullying behaviors on all levels.

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Appendix

Workplace Bullying Qualitative Survey and Alignment to Research Questions

The following research questions drove this study:

- 1: What techniques or training do employees note or recommend to reduce incidents of bullying?
- 2: What are the local federal office employees' perceptions of how bullying cases are handled?

**The following are the survey questions,
noting which of the above research questions they are aligned to.**

Target Questions- (Questions where the participants may have been a victim)

1. Have you been the target of workplace bullying? If no, skip to Question 8. (R1)
2. If so, can you describe the situation? i.e. who was involved – a supervisor, peer, or someone else? (R1)
3. Was the bullying reported? (R1)
4. If so, what was the outcome? (R1)
5. How long did the bullying last? (R1)
6. Is it ongoing? (R1)
7. How, if at all, was your work performance affected by workplace bullying? (R1)
8. Describe how you feel regarding how these cases are handled. (R1)
9. What training is currently in place to reduce incidents of workplace bullying? (R1)
10. What trainings would you like to be provided to reduce incidents of workplace bullying? (R1)

Witness Questions (Questions where the participant was not a victim, but was a witness)

11. Have you been a witness to workplace bullying? If no, skip to Question 15. (R2)
12. If so, what action, if any did you take? (R2)
13. Did you witness workplace bullying immediately upon being employed at the workplace, or some other time after starting work there? (R2)
14. If so, how has the experience affected your perspective of the workplace? (R2)
15. Are you currently witnessing workplace bullying in your immediate area or any other area of the workplace? (R2)
16. Explain if and how you been affected as a witness of workplace bullying? (R2)

Demographic Questions

17. What is your gender?
18. What is your race? A) Caucasian B) African American C) Asian D) Hispanic E) Bi-Racial F) American Indian
19. What is your year of birth?