WORKPLACE BULLYING SCALE: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on developing a workplace bullying tool that is contextually sensitive to the Nigerian work population. Interviews and open ended questionnaires were distributed conveniently among bank employees and the data gathered was used in generating items for the proposed workplace bullying scale. After item analyses, 33 items were developed for this study and two items were added from literature. The developed tool was then administered to 105 bank employees and the data collected was used for item reliability and validity analyses. The scale was found to have a Cronbach alpha of .951 and a split half reliability of .807. Results of exploratory factor analyses reveal that the tool has four sub scales which were labelled emotional abuse, behavioural and cognitive abuse, supervisor specific abuse and physical abuse.

INTRODUCTION

According to the International Labour Office (ILO), bullying refers to the repeated and over time offensive behaviours through vindictive, cruel or malicious attempts to humiliate or undermine an individual or groups of employees. (ILO – Violence at Work, 2002). It is a combination of tactics in which numerous types of hostile communication and behaviour are used. As such, bullying is not limited to active communication but is also perpetrated through passive, non-acts of social ostracism (Tracy, Ludgen-Sandvik &Alberts, 2006). That is to say, bullying is communicated through a variety of verbal and nonverbal behaviours that include, but are not limited to: social isolation, silent treatment, or impersonal interactions, excessive criticism or monitoring of work, assigning tasks above or below competence levels, or arbitrarily changing tasks, withholding information or depriving responsibility, verbal aggression discouragement of initiative or public humiliation (Einarsen, 1996; Keashly, 1998; O'Moore, 2000; Zapf, Knorz & Kulla, 1996).
Workplace place bullying has been found to have several dire tangible and intangible negative effects on employees and organizations alike (Salin, 2003). In the case of employees, it may affect their physical, social and psychological wellbeing resulting in: suicidal tendency, loss of self-respect and self-image (Djukorvik, McCormack & Casmir, 2004); high stress, posttraumatic stress disorder, phobias, sleeps disturbances and increased depression (Department of labour & Industry, 2008). It may also cause employees to feel unhappy, anxious, withdrawn and unduly cautious, all of which affect their performance (Nnaike, 2012, Hoel, Einarsen & Cooper, 2003; Keashly & Jagatic, 2003). For the organizations, it adversely impacts on employee commitment, motivation, absenteeism and turnover/ turnover intentions (Oghojafor, Muo & Olufayo, 2002). There are also costs associated with replacement of staff that left due to bullying, work efforts being displaced, bullying-related investigations and legal services. Workplace bullying has also been found to affect interpersonal relationships within and outside the workplace including family relationships. In light of the above, workplace bullying has become an issue of interest to Industrial/Organizational psychologists in their quest to promote safe work practices in their environment.

Several researchers have tried to explain the causes and possible antecedents of workplace bullying. While some researchers have focused on personality traits of perpetrators and victims (e.g. Coyne et al., 2000), others have concentrated on the role played by deficiencies in the work environment (e.g. Einarsen, 1996; Leymann, 1992; Vartia, 1996; Zapf et al., 1996). Also, group processes, such as scapegoat processes, have been brought up by some researchers (e.g. Thylefors, 1987). However, to a growing

extent, researchers are acknowledging that bullying and other forms of aggression often are the result of an interaction between individual and situational factors (Aquino & Bradfield 2000; Neuman & Baron, 1998; O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin & Glew, 1996; Zapf, 1999). That is to say, the individual and the organization may exert mutual influence on each other, both in the sense that an individual may acquire aggressive tendencies in a certain environment and in the sense that the work environment and the work culture may be influenced by a certain aggressive individual (O'Leary-Kelly et al., 1996). Thus, bullying is seldom explained only by one factor alone, but is rather a multi-causal phenomenon (Zapf, 1999). Salin (2003) proposed that bullying is caused by three basic antecedents namely enabling structures and processes (perceived power imbalances, low perceived costs, dissatisfaction and frustration), motivating structures (internal competition, reward systems and expected benefits) and precipitating processes or triggering circumstances (downsizing/restructuring, organizational changes, changes in composition of the work group). Hence bullying can be explained by an interaction of all three processes or at least two of them.

Recently, the media and several studies have highlighted the increase in workplace violence, especially bullying, in organizations world-wide. In Nigeria, numerous researches have established the thriving presence of bullying in its work environments (Adenuga, 2009; Owoyemi & Oyelere, 2010; Oghojafor et.al,; Adejumo &Azuh,2013). Although most studies have focused on isolating its antecedents in order to better understand, prevent and manage workplace bullying in the workplace; fewer studies still have focused on the development of valid and reliable tools for identifying and diagnosing the presence and extent/prevalence of workplace bullying in organizations. Also, most of the studies focused on developing instruments to measure workplace bullying were developed in foreign populations and mostly for the health sector. This study proposes to develop and validate a contextually sensitive tool for identifying and diagnosing workplace bullying presence and prevalence in Nigerian organizations.

METHOD

Participants: The participants of this study were recruited from employees of banks in Lagos State Nigeria. All participants participated voluntarily and their anonymity was guaranteed. Although a total of 150 questionnaires were distributed conveniently among employees, only 105 were returned, properly filled and analysed in this study. Out of the 105 participants, fifty six were male respondents (53.3%) while forty nine were female respondents (46.7%). Fifty seven participants were single while forty eight were married. Also, the lowest education qualification of participants was the OND/NCE level accounting for 35.2%. 44.8% of participants had a bachelor's degree or its equivalent while 20% had attained a postgraduate degree. Lastly, the participants had a mean age of 29.4 years (SD= 4.3, Range= 20-45).

Table 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	PERCENTAGE
GENDER	
MALE	53.3%
FEMALE	46.7%
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	
SSCE/O LEVEL	2.9%
OND/ND/NCE/HND	32.4%
BACHELORS	44.8%
PG	20%
MARITAL STATUS	
SINGLE	54.3%
MARRIED	45.7
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
CONTRACT STAFF	41.9%
FULL-TIME STAFF	58.1%
POSITION IN ORGANIZATION	
JUNIOR	45.7%
MIDLEVEL	44.8%
MANAGEMENT	9.5%

Instrument: Thirty five items were developed for the workplace bullying scale. The items were written in behavioural terms with no reference to the term "bullying". The items referred to categories of abuse that emphasize, respectively, elements of a contextual-directed (control and manipulation of the work context), emotional-directed (emotional abuse), cognitive-directed (professional discredit) and behavioural-directed nature (role devaluation). Responses had to be given on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (*Nothing*) to 4 (*Extremely*). The internal consistency (Cronbach´s alpha) for the scale was 0.94. In addition to socio-demographic items, the validation questionnaire also included two additional measures used to validate the Workplace Bullying Scale which include:

- The Negative Acts Questionnaire (Einarsen and Hoel, 2001): this consists of 22 items and measures how often (on a Likert 5-point scale) the respondent has been subjected to a range of negative acts and potentially harassing behaviors during the last 6 months. Factor analysis of the NAQ by Niedl (1995) elicited the following factors: attacking the private person, social isolation, work-related measures, and physical violence. Cronbach Alpha for each subscale is represented as follows: personal derogation (0.85), work-related harassment (0.57), and social exclusion (0.33).
- The Workplace Harassment Scale (Bjo¨rkqvist, O¨ sterman, and Hjelt-Ba¨ck, 1994). The questionnaire consists of 24 items, with reliability (Cronbach's a) of 0.95. Participants assess on a 5-point scale how often they have been exposed to 24 types of degrading and oppressing activities by their colleagues during the last 6 months. Items include: 'being unduly criticized,' 'being shouted at loudly,' 'being isolated,' and 'lies about you told to others.' Participants indicate whether the aggressor is male or female Rational appearing aggression (Cronbach's a = 0.70) included such items as 'reduced opportunities to express oneself,' 'being interrupted,' 'having one's work judged in an unjust manner,' and 'being criticized.' Social manipulation (Cronbach's a = 0.82) included such items as 'insulting comments about one's private life,' 'backbiting,' 'spreading false rumors,' and 'not being spoken to.

PROCEDURE

In developing the workplace bullying Scale, the guidelines recommended by several authors such as Haynes, Richard, and Kubany (1995), Haladyna, Downing, and Rodriguez (2002), and Moreno, Martínez, and Muñiz (2006) were followed. The first step involved generating a satisfactory definition of workplace bullying and definitions of the specific categories included that could be used as the basis for item development and evaluation. The researcher embarked on a systematic review of the workplace bullying literature and surveys of experts to achieve this (Einarsen &Raknes, 1997; Cowie, Neylor, Rivers, Smith & Pereira, 2002; Rodríguez-Carballeira, Escartin, Gomez &Zapf, 2010;etc.)

The second step consisted of the item generation. Data was collected using three methods: Open-ended questionnaires, Focus Group discussions (FGD) and Key Witness interviews. In each case, participants were asked questions regarding perceived prevalence of organizational bullying in their organizations and how it is most frequently expressed. They were also encouraged to share experiences and the ways they believe it can be best managed.

i) **FGD**: Two consecutive Focus Group discussions were conducted among bank employees. Each FGD consisted of 6-8 conveniently sampled bank employees, the researcher and an assistant. The sessions lasted for a minimum of 30 minutes each and the discussions were electronically recorded

by an assistant. These reports were analyzed for recurrent and salient themes. Twenty recurrent themes were identified.

ii) **KWI**: Key Witness Interviews were also conducted with 4 Bank employees (two managerial and two non-managerial). Reports were recorded electronically and analyzed for recurrent and salient themes.

Open-ended Questions: Eighty questionnaires containing open-ended questions were distributed to conveniently sampled staff of United Bank of Africa (UBA), Skye Bank plc., Guarantee Trust Bank, First Bank Nigeria and Zenith Bank but only sixty five were returned and properly completed. One hundred and ninety five responses were extracted from the sixty five questionnaires retrieved. These responses were subjected to analyses which finally yielded 33 items for the intended organizational bullying questionnaire. These were compared with the results from the FGD and KWI results. Most of the themes were repeated across all three methods of data collection. However, two themes measuring ostracism and physical violence were raised in the Interviews (FGD and KWI) but not in the written responses. These were used to create two items which were added to the scale making a total of 35 items. These 35 items were subjected to validation analysis (content validity, face validity and factor analysis) and reliability analysis to ensure the integrity of the measure.

The third step involved scale validation which included presenting the scale to a group of experts for review. Items were reviewed for clarity, relevance, and redundancy and were reworded required, which resulted in the retention of all 35 items. Also, the scale was subjected to item reliability analyses and factor analysis procedures to ensure its reliability and validity.

RESULTS

Validation of Instrument

The already constructed workplace bullying tool was distributed to bank employees in a pilot study. Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) branches in Amuwo –Odofin Local Government Area were randomly selected as the setting for this pilot study. All branches of GTB within this Local Government Area participated in this study and the respondents were conveniently sampled. One hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed to employees of GTB and one hundred and five (105) were properly completed and returned. These questionnaires were analyzed to ensure validity and reliability of all scales to be used in this study especially the Organizational Bullying scale being developed and other scales used in this study.

Face validation was used to judge the items generated and ascertain that they appear to measure the construct under consideration. Several items were flagged by the experts to be reworded in order to reduce ambiguity and convey the intended meaning of the items. No item was discarded from the scale.

Content validation was also used to ascertain the degree to which the Organizational Bullying scale contains the appropriate pool of items to represent the construct of interest. The items contained in the proposed scale were presented to four experts (Psychologists) to assess the suitability of the items as actual measure of this psychological construct. The experts were asked to rate on a scale of one to five, the relevance of each item to

measuring organizational bullying. Based on Kerlinger, (1973), any item that did not receive up to 60% criterion for acceptance was to be dropped from the scale. No items were dropped by the expert judges for not measuring the constructs in question. Nunnally 1978, cited in Okurame, (2002), Sunmola (2001) and Anastasi & Urbina (1997) reported that the use of expert opinion/ expert rating technique in design of instruments can serve for content validation.

Construct validation was also used as part of the validation procedure of the organizational bullying scale. Two existing scales, The Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) and The Workplace Harassment Scale (WHS), which measure a similar construct, were administered along with the Organizational bullying scale (OBS). Person r correlation of the NAQ and OBS scales yielded a significant positive correlation/ validity coefficient of 0.662, $P \leq 0.01$. While correlations of the OBS & WHS yielded a significant positive correlation/ validity coefficient of 0.522, $P \leq 0.01$. This shows that both scales are measuring a similar construct and hence it possesses a concurrent validity.

Factor analysis was also conducted on the pilot study data to prove validity. The responses of the 105 participants on the Organizational Bullying scale were subjected to factor analysis. In accordance with Brown's (1984) assertion that factor analysis is a technique that is typically utilized to reduce a set of measured variables to an interpretable set of fewer 'unmeasured' or latent variables, the factor analysis was done with the 35 items administered.

Table 2: Kaiser Myer Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.808
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2497.189
	Df	595
	Sig.	.000

Results of the *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* sampling adequacy (KMO) test and underlying structure (Bartlett test of Sphericity) was also carried out on the data to determine its suitability for factor analysis. The KMO obtained is .845 – a satisfactory value for sampling adequacy, and Bartlett test is $\chi^{2=}$ 2709.467, $p < 0.01$ suggesting that the scale has more than one dimension. The results of the factor analysis revealed that the Organizational Bullying Scale had four factors or dimensions.

After assessing the items under each factor the factors were labelled. Factor one was labelled ***Emotional abuse***, factor two was labelled ***Behavioural and Cognitive abuse*** , factor three was labelled ***Supervisor specific abuse*** while factor four was labelled ***Physical abuse***. Below is a table showing the factors their labels, factor loadings, eigenvalues and percentage of variances

Table 3.1 Matrix Table Showing Factors, Factor Loadings, Eigenvalues and Percentage Variances

	Factor 1 Emotional abuse	Factor 2 Behavioural and cognitive abuse	Factor 3 Supervisor specific abuse	Factor 4 Physical abuse
	Item 34			
	Item 26	Item 9		
	Item 25	Item 2	Item 18	
	Item 28	Item 12	Item 17	Item 35
	Item 32	Item 7	Item 19	
	Item 22	Item 4	Item 16	
	Item 30	Item 24	Item 15	
	Item 23	Item 10	Item 14	
	Item 21	Item 3		
	Item 31	Item 11		
	Item 33	Item 13		
	Item 27	Item 5		
	Item 29	Item 1		
	Item 20			
	Item 6			
	Item 8			
Eigenvalues	13.23	3.02	1.32	1.21
Percentage Variance	22.5%	15.97%	10.05%	5.07%
Cronbach alpha(α)	0.94	0.89	0.82	-

Reliability

In establishing reliability for the scales in this study, all scales were subjected to Item analyses based on the following criteria: (Note: each item met at least two of these criteria satisfactorily, if not such item was subsequently dropped from the scale):

i. Cronbach Alpha: All scales used in this study yielded a Cronbach alpha of .70 and above. This is regarded as acceptable according to George & Mallery (2003) and Nunnally & Bernstein (1994). Particularly, the Negative Acts Questionnaire α= 0.816, Workplace Harassment Scale α=0.789, and the Organizational Bullying Scale α=0.947. The Organizational Bullying Scale reported a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.807.

ii. The improvement in scale Alpha (Internal consistency) if the item was removed: In order to investigate what contribution the item makes to the homogeneity of the OBS scale, items Cronbach Alpha Value is monitored. This value is observed for improvement if such item is deleted from the scale. This is indicated in the "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleteted Column" of the Item-Total statistics table. The Cronbach Alpha if item is deleted is compared against that of the reliability statistics (coefficient) in the result printout of SPSS package (Version 20).

iii. The Item's Corrected Item-Total Correlation: To determine if the item score is going in the same direction as the total scale score this statistic is required. It is another index of scale homogeneity resulting from the correlation of respondents' score on each item with scale total. This coefficient for each item is shown in the "Corrected Item – Total Correlation Column" of the Item-Total Statistics. McCreary and Thompson (2006) suggested that a value not less than 0.3 is desirable for initial psychometric analysis.

Overall, the reliability assessments of this scale were found to be acceptable.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The principal aim of this research was to develop a Workplace Bullying Scale which will be contextually sensitive to the Nigerian working population and to examine its validity and reliability analysis. Items were generated and tested on conveniently sampled bankers in Lagos, Nigeria. Factor analyses resulted in 33 items distributed across four categories: emotional abuse, behavioural and cognitive abuse, supervisor specific abuse and physical abuse categories.

The findings of this study are in accordance with previous theoretical and empirical research (Escartín, Rodriquez-Carballeria, Gomez-Benito& Zapf 2010; Jennifer, Cowie, & Ananiadou, 2003 and Rodriquez-Carballeria et. al 2010). These results are similar to the findings of Rodriquez-Carballeria et. al (2010) and Fornes (2003) which also proposed four dimension models of work place bullying scales. Rodriquez-Carballeria et. al (2010) found that bullying possessed an emotional component(emotional abuse), cognitive component(Professional discredit and denigration) , behavioural component (devaluation of role in the workplace) and context directed component (control and manipulation of work context). Escartin et. al(2010) also supports the four factor model of work place bullying showing similar categories to those proposed in this study.

The results of the present study should be interpreted considering some limitations. As a cross-sectional study built on self-report data, the relations found in this paper cannot be interpreted in terms of cause and effect. Yet, this does not question the fact that this Workplace Bullying Scale showed the expected relationships with other relevant measures. In cross-sectional self-report studies, method variance is a threat (Spector, 1992). Also, the use of conveniently sampled bank employees may call to question the generalizability of this research's findings. Although Lagos Metropolis is considered a melting point of Nigerian youth and culture, the use of employees in only Lagos State Nigeria may also call to question the generalizability of this study's findings to other extreme cultures of Nigeria.

The development of the workplace bullying scale hopes to contribute to the existing literature offering a tool for the assessment of workplace bullying, which could enable researchers and human resource managers to target interventions to detect and reduce workplace bullying more effectively.

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