



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

## Research Commons at the University of Waikato

### Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**Workplace Bullying in New Zealand  
Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics:  
Prominence, processes, and emotions**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
in  
**Management Communication**  
at  
**The University of Waikato**

by

**Alison Thirlwall**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

2011

## **Abstract**

This is a study of workplace bullying in New Zealand in the higher education sector. A number of western countries, including the USA, Australia, and many European countries, have identified bullying as a serious issue and interest in the phenomenon has grown worldwide. Recently, there has been a surge of research interest in New Zealand. However, a number of important questions remain unanswered. These questions relate to the extent of bullying, the absence of a comprehensive understanding of the process as targets experience it, and the emotional experience of bullying. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to establish the extent of workplace bullying in the New Zealand context and explore the ways in which targets construct their experiences. Specifically, the research investigated three questions: (1) To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs)?, (2) How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?, and (3) How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying? Several hypotheses were tested to probe these questions further.

The study uses multiple methods, including quantitative and qualitative analyses, to enable a deep and comprehensive exploration of bullying (Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, & Pereira, 2002). An internationally recognised measure, the Negative Acts Questionnaire, was used to collect quantitative data from 151 workers in half of the ITPs in New Zealand, whilst semi-structured interviews with 31 workers, from nine ITPs, gathered qualitative data.

Survey findings suggested that New Zealand ITP workers experienced negative acts at a higher level when compared to European workers. Being in a low-power position did not necessarily equate to a greater likelihood of being a target. Women and men reported similar levels of bullying, whilst part-time and temporary workers reported less than full-time and permanent workers. However, Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, reported significantly higher levels of bullying than non-Maori workers.

Results from a thematic analysis of interviews indicated that targets of bullying constructed their experiences as a complex process that typically starts and ends with a change in an already troubled workplace. During the episode of bullying, various resistance strategies are possible and these have differing degrees of success. Although complex, the process followed a pathway that was

similar for all targets, regardless of the differences in their experiences and backgrounds. Targets punctuated their experiences as extending well beyond the bullying behaviours themselves. Furthermore, they discussed a range of approaches to resistance that were associated with a variety of constraints to agency (Thompson, Nalder, & Lount, 2006; Deutsch & Coleman, 2006). Targets perceived their job satisfaction as negatively affected by bullying-related behaviours, but their job performance to be unaffected. Enjoyment of, or a commitment to, the job itself appeared to mitigate the effects of bullying on performance. Targets were emphatic about the difficulties they encountered in seeking organisational support. Organisations sequestered their responsibility for managing bullying and consequently contributed to its continuation. Severing the immediate work relationship was the only way in which bullying ended, although the parting occurred in several different ways, and this finding has particular implications for management. The themes formed a process model that comprises the broad range of experiences, contexts, and outcomes, presenting a challenge and an extension to existing models.

Finally, the research identified naturally occurring metaphors. These were analysed using a systematic process to explore targets' emotional experiences of bullying. Key findings were that targets described bullying in terms of violence, madness, natural forces, desert islands, water, games and hell. Based on an analysis of these metaphors, sadness, shame, and pain, emerged as the most prominent emotions. These findings provide a contribution to the small body of research into metaphors of bullying and emotions.

In addition to providing insight into New Zealand ITP-specific experiences and making a comparison with those of other in countries, the thesis adds to existing research in several ways. The development of a comprehensive model, which uses the perspectives of those who have experienced bullying and highlights the context in which it occurs, extends existing conceptualisations of the bullying process. Identification of the metaphors that are common to the experience of bullying both supports and extends existing research. Finally, construction of targets' emotions from their metaphors extends previous research into the emotional experience of bullying and addresses certain methodological shortcomings of earlier studies.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the people who supported this study. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Ted Zorn and Associate Professor Jarrod Haar for their guidance, plus Professor David McKie, Dr. Prue Holmes, Ms. Monica Van Oostrom, and the staff of the university library for their valuable input. In addition, I am grateful for the help of the CEOs who allowed me into their organisations and the many volunteers who completed the survey or shared their stories with me. Finally, I thank my friends for their encouragement and my husband, Mike, for his constancy.

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	iii
List of Figures .....	x
List of Tables .....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW .....	1
1.1. The problem .....	1
1.2. Purpose.....	2
1.3. Significance.....	3
1.4. Organisation of the thesis .....	4
CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
2.1. Conceptualising bullying.....	5
2.1.1. Bullying behaviours .....	7
2.1.2. Behaviours excluded from bullying .....	9
2.1.2.1. Violence .....	9
2.1.2.2. Sexual and racial harassment .....	9
2.1.3. Harmful consequences .....	10
2.1.4. Intention to cause harm .....	10
2.1.5. Labelling and mislabelling .....	11
2.1.6. Persistence of bullying behaviours .....	12
2.1.6.1. Multiple incidents .....	12
2.1.6.2. Individual incidents .....	12
2.1.7. Time limits.....	13
2.2. Measurement .....	14
2.3. Bullying as a process.....	15
2.4. Antecedents of bullying.....	19
2.4.1. Characteristics of organisations .....	19
2.4.2. Characteristics of targets and perpetrators .....	21
2.5. Organisational position of perpetrators.....	23
2.6. Consequences of bullying.....	24
2.6.1. Effects on targets.....	24
2.6.2. Effects on organisations .....	25
2.7. Strategies for managing bullying .....	27
2.7.1. Organisational strategies .....	27
2.7.2. Targets' strategies .....	28

2.8. Legal developments.....	29
2.9. Metaphors and the emotional experience of bullying .....	30
2.9.1. Definitions and use of metaphors .....	30
2.9.2. Metaphors of bullying .....	32
2.10. Research questions and hypotheses .....	33
2.11. Conclusion .....	40
CHAPTER 3: METHODS.....	41
3.1. Methodology and method .....	41
3.2. Study design – Part 1: Quantitative .....	43
3.2.1. Sector.....	43
3.2.2. Sample and participants.....	45
3.2.3. Online questionnaire .....	47
3.2.4. Pilot testing .....	48
3.2.5. Measures.....	48
3.2.6. Development of a New Zealand Negative Acts Questionnaire.....	49
3.2.6.1. Bullying measures .....	49
3.2.6.2. Other variables. ....	51
3.2.7. Similarities and differences between international studies .....	52
3.2.8. Analysis .....	54
3.3. Study Design – Part 2: Qualitative .....	54
3.3.1. Rationale for using interviews .....	54
3.3.2. Design.....	55
3.3.3. Interviewee selection.....	56
3.3.4. Conducting the interviews .....	57
3.3.5. Interview analysis .....	58
3.3.6. Process model .....	61
3.4. Metaphors.....	61
3.4.1. Metaphor collection .....	61
3.4.2. Metaphor analysis .....	62
3.5. Conclusion .....	66
CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS.....	67
4.1. Descriptive statistics.....	67
4.1.1. Frequencies .....	67

4.1.2. Bullying correlations .....	71
4.2. International comparisons .....	72
4.3. Bullying and power relationships .....	76
4.3.1. Female versus male workers.....	77
4.3.2. Part-time versus full-time workers.....	77
4.3.3. Temporary versus permanent workers .....	82
4.3.4. Maori versus non-Maori workers.....	85
4.4. Bullying and job outcomes .....	88
<b>CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEW RESULTS</b>	
<b>THE CONSTRUCTION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING .....</b>	<b>91</b>
5.1. Precipitating Structure .....	91
5.1.1. Restructuring.....	92
5.1.2. New people .....	93
5.2. Target selection .....	94
5.2.1. Standing out.....	95
5.2.2. Standing up .....	96
5.2.3. Standing back.....	96
5.3. Trigger.....	97
5.3.1. Conflict.....	98
5.3.2. Debility .....	99
5.4. Abusive behaviours .....	101
5.4.1. Aggression.....	102
5.4.1.1. Verbal aggression .....	102
5.4.1.1.1. Shouting and personal attacks.....	102
5.4.1.1.2. Threats .....	103
5.4.1.1.3 Jokes and teasing .....	103
5.4.1.2. Written aggression.....	104
5.4.1.3. Non-verbal aggression .....	105
5.4.2. Unfair work conditions.....	106
5.4.2.1. Denial of reasonable requests.....	106
5.4.2.2. Denial of employment rights.....	107
5.4.2.3. Inequitable treatment .....	107
5.4.3. Dishonesty .....	109
5.4.3.1. Lies .....	109
5.4.3.2. Stealing credit.....	110
5.4.4. Ostracism.....	110

5.4.5. Abusive behaviours and the Negative Acts Questionnaire.....	112
5.5. Constraints .....	116
5.5.1. Cash.....	116
5.5.2. Commitment .....	117
5.5.3. Concern .....	118
5.6. Resistance .....	119
5.6.1. Active resistance .....	120
5.6.1.1. Complaints .....	120
5.6.1.1.1. Personal Grievances .....	120
5.6.1.1.2. Threatening legal action.....	121
5.6.1.1.3 Internal complaints .....	122
5.6.1.2. Confrontation .....	123
5.6.1.2.1. Direct speaking.....	124
5.6.1.2.2. Humour .....	124
5.6.2. Passive resistance.....	126
5.6.2.1. Support.....	126
5.6.2.2. Avoidance .....	127
5.6.2.3. Deflection.....	128
5.6.3. Paradoxical resistance .....	129
5.6.3.1. Work-to-rule.....	129
5.6.3.2. Undermining.....	130
5.6.3.3. Violence .....	131
5.7. Organisational sequestering.....	135
5.7.1. Reframing .....	136
5.7.1.1. Reframing as a personal issue .....	136
5.7.1.2. Reframing as trivial .....	137
5.7.1.3. Reframing through denial .....	138
5.7.1.4. Reframing as a defence.....	139
5.7.2. Rejigging .....	139
5.7.3. Rebuffing.....	141
5.8. Resolution .....	145
5.8.1. Perpetrator leaves.....	145
5.8.2. Target leaves.....	146

5.9. Workplace bullying process model.....	148
5.10. Conclusion .....	157
<b>CHAPTER 6: INTERVIEW RESULTS</b>	
<b>METAPHORS AND EMOTIONS.....</b>	<b>158</b>
6.1. Metaphors of bullying experiences.....	159
6.1.1. Violence.....	160
6.1.1.1. Fights and battles .....	160
6.1.1.2. Attacks .....	162
6.1.1.3. Torture or punishment .....	164
6.1.2. Madness.....	167
6.1.3. Natural forces.....	169
6.1.4. Water .....	170
6.1.5. Desert island .....	171
6.1.6. Games.....	173
6.1.7. Hell.....	174
6.2. Metaphors of perpetrators.....	175
6.2.1. Duplicity.....	176
6.2.2. Dangerous animals .....	177
6.2.3. Explosions .....	178
6.2.4. Other metaphors.....	179
6.3. Metaphors of targets.....	180
6.3.1. Children .....	180
6.3.2. Weak creatures.....	181
6.3.3. Leaves.....	183
6.4. Metaphors and emotions.....	183
6.4.1. Metaphors .....	183
6.4.2. Emotions.....	187
6.5. Chapter summary .....	192
<b>CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>193</b>
7.1. Discussion of key findings .....	194
7.1.1. The extent of bullying .....	195
7.1.1.1. Differences in national culture .....	195
7.1.1.2. Influence of sector .....	197
7.1.1.3. Bullying attention and unions .....	198
7.1.1.4. Methodological differences.....	199
7.1.1.5. Item consistency .....	199

7.1.1.6. Power relationships.....	201
7.1.1.6.1. Maori versus non-Maori .....	201
7.1.1.6.2. Women versus men .....	203
7.1.1.6.3. Part-time versus full-time workers .....	203
7.1.1.6.4. Temporary versus permanent contract workers.....	204
7.1.2. The construction of bullying.....	206
7.1.2.1. Work relationships.....	207
7.1.2.2. Bullying and job outcomes .....	209
7.1.2.2.1. Job satisfaction .....	209
7.1.2.2.2. Job performance .....	210
7.1.3. Construction of emotions .....	212
7.1.3.1. Resistance.....	212
7.1.3.2. Sequestering .....	213
7.1.3.3. Universality .....	214
7.2. Implications.....	215
7.2.1. For theory .....	215
7.2.2. For practice .....	216
7.2.2.1. Acknowledging and managing bullying .....	216
7.2.2.2. Managing the target and the perpetrator .....	218
7.2.2.3. Timeframes .....	218
7.2.2.4. Behaviour management .....	219
7.2.2.5. Organisational sequestering .....	220
7.2.2.6. Policy creation.....	220
7.2.2.7. Metaphors for intervention.....	220
7.3. Limitations .....	221
7.4. Future research .....	223
7.5. Conclusions .....	225
Bibliography .....	228
Appendix A: Ethics approval .....	244
Appendix B: Interview guide .....	245
Appendix C: Survey questions .....	246
Appendix D: Information sheet for survey .....	249
Appendix E: Information sheet for interviewees.....	250
Appendix F: Information sheet for HR workers.....	251
Appendix G: Consent form .....	252

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Enabling Structures and Processes .....	21
Figure 2: Workplace Bullying Process Model .....	149
Figure 3: Workplace Bullying Process Model .....	206

## List of Tables

Table 1: Types of Bullying Behaviour.....	8
Table 2: The Structure of Critical Events: From mobbing to expulsion.....	16
Table 3: The Communicative Generation and Regeneration of Employee Emotional Abuse .....	17
Table 4: International Study Comparison .....	52
Table 5: Sample Summary of Five Targets' Bullying Process Experiences .....	60
Table 6: Percentage of Respondents Endorsing Each Item of the NAQ .....	69
Table 7: Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Bullying and Job Outcomes .....	72
Table 8: NAQ Frequencies Comparison .....	74
Table 9: Ranking of Response Frequencies .....	75
Table 10: T-Test Results by Gender for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures.....	78
Table 11: T-Test Results by Part-Time Status for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measure .....	80
Table 12: T-Test Results by Temporary Contract Workers for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures .....	83
Table 13: T-Test Results by Maori Ethnicity for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures .....	86
Table 14: Regression Analysis of Bullying Subscales Towards Job Satisfaction .....	89
Table 15: Abusive Behaviour Subthemes Compared to NAQ Items .....	113
Table 16: Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Horizontal .	151
Table 17: Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Upward then downward .....	152
Table 18: Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Downward then horizontal .....	153
Table 19: Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Downward and ongoing .....	154
Table 20: Summary Comparison of Existing Workplace Bullying Processes....	155

Table 21: Examples of Negative Terms in Storm and Storm’s Taxonomy .....	159
Table 22: Summary of Primary Emotions Related to Violence Metaphors.....	167
Table 23: Emotions Associated with Madness Metaphors .....	168
Table 24: Emotions Associated with Natural Forces Metaphors .....	170
Table 25: Emotions Associated with Water Metaphors.....	171
Table 26: Emotions Associated with Desert Islands Metaphors .....	172
Table 27: Emotions Associated with Games Metaphors .....	174
Table 28: Emotions Associated with Hell Metaphors .....	175
Table 29: Emotions Associated with Duplicity Metaphors .....	176
Table 30: Emotions Associated with Dangerous Animal Metaphors.....	178
Table 31: Emotions Associated with Explosions Metaphors.....	178
Table 32: Emotions Associated with Other Metaphors .....	180
Table 33: Emotions Associated with Children Metaphors .....	181
Table 34: Emotions Associated with Weak Creatures Metaphors .....	182
Table 35: Comparison of Metaphor Findings .....	185
Table 36: Metaphor Themes and Emotions – Experiences.....	189
Table 37: Metaphor Themes and Emotions - Perpetrators.....	190
Table 38: Metaphor Themes and Emotions - Targets.....	190

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The focus of this study is workplace bullying. It explores the extent of bullying in the higher education sector and examines the lived experiences of people who have experienced bullying in the workplace. The study uses multiple methods to provide a variety of perspectives of the phenomenon.

### 1.1. The problem

Anyone may be a target of workplace bullying and the effects are often severe. In this thesis, bullying is broadly defined as repetitive negative actions and mistreatment that causes harm to recipients. Studies from around the world have shown that the effects of bullying are widespread. Consequently, bullying may affect targets, perpetrators, colleagues, the organisation, and wider networks of families and friends (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Field, 1996; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003). In Europe, recognition of the impact and importance of bullying has grown over the last two decades, while in the USA it has begun to gain momentum more recently. However, despite increasing research, legislation, and public campaigns to reduce its impact, bullying remains a major problem around the world.

My interest in bullying started over a decade ago, when a group of white-collar workers forced a school manager out of a polytechnic. Initially, senior managers and union representatives appeared powerless and unable to manage the problems. As the situation went out of control, the senior managers and union representatives capitulated to the demands of the group, which ultimately cost the organisation a large amount of money in an out-of-court settlement with the school manager. At the time, the concept of workplace bullying was virtually unheard of in New Zealand. Furthermore, the self-help books and support publications that were available referred to countries that had professional unions and legal support available for employees, for example, the UK. Solutions recommended in these publications usually included getting union help and changing jobs, (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 1999; Field, 1996). These solutions, while perhaps reasonable, seemed limited and with

little empirical basis to substantiate their effectiveness. In addition, the books focused on the bullying of junior workers by managers, so they were of little relevance to the situation I encountered.

Subsequently, research into workplace bullying began in New Zealand and several publications appeared. For example, Ayling (2002), motivated by her negative experiences at a New Zealand polytechnic, researched the legal approaches taken to workplace bullying in other countries. Based on her findings, she made a case for legal protection against bullying for New Zealand workers, although to date no specific legal protection exists. In an industry study, Burt (2004) surveyed workers and correlated their responses to questions about jokes, in order to identify people who were more likely to consider themselves as targets of bullying. Other New Zealand research has reported bullying of student nurses (Fell, 2000; Foster, Mackie, & Barnett, 2004; Fraser, 2002), and more recently a study was undertaken in the health, hospitality, and university sectors (Bentley et al., 2009; Catley et al., 2010; O'Driscoll et al., 2010a; O'Driscoll et al., 2010b). Non-academic work in New Zealand includes a self-help book that draws attention to the potential cost of bullying for businesses (Needham, 2003). Finally, Olsen (2003) highlighted the need for employer guidelines for managing bullying. However, despite the growing attention and literature, significant gaps remain.

## **1.2. Purpose**

Although there is now a growing interest in workplace bullying in New Zealand, a number of important questions remain unanswered. These questions relate to the extent of bullying, the absence of a comprehensive understanding of the process as experienced by targets, and the emotional experience of bullying. Furthermore, the international literature on workplace bullying, while becoming increasingly extensive, exhibits a number of limitations. The main purposes of this study, then, are to establish the extent of bullying in one small segment of the New Zealand workplace and to identify the ways that people experience bullying. The aim is to build on and extend the literature to achieve these purposes. Thus, to fulfil these purposes, the research addresses three questions:

*Research question 1: To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics?*

*Research question 2: How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?*

*Research question 3: How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?*

In addition, tests of several hypotheses supplement and elaborate these questions. Presentation and discussion of the hypotheses appears in chapter 2.

Extending knowledge in this way provides an opportunity to understand experiences from New Zealanders' perspectives and contribute to the growing body of international research into workplace bullying. Furthermore, the thesis adds to existing research literature by developing a more comprehensive process model than currently exists, one that describes bullying from the perspectives of those who have experienced it. It also identifies emotions that are common to the experience of bullying, extending previous research on the use of metaphor to capture the emotional experience of bullying.

### **1.3. Significance**

The study uses multiple methods, including both qualitative and quantitative analyses, to enable a deeper and more comprehensive exploration of bullying. In doing so, the study makes several contributions to the literature.

First, it uses an internationally tested measurement tool, the Negative Acts Questionnaire (Bergen Bullying Research Group, n.d.) to establish the extent of bullying in the New Zealand ITP sector. The data from this measure provides a reference point, in the absence of similar studies in New Zealand, and allows some comparison with overseas findings. While there are limitations to the comparison, the study also explored the extent to which particular subgroups within the sample experienced bullying. This enabled a more fine-grained analysis that goes beyond describing the overall extent of bullying and focused on the effects on groups that are likely to be most at risk.

Second, the development of a comprehensive process model of the complex experience of bullying extends and overcomes some of the limitations of the existing process models of Leymann (1990) and Lutgen-Sandvik (2003). The third and final contribution is an extension to the understanding of emotional experiences of bullying, through analysis of metaphors. While other studies have

examined the emotional experience of bullying through metaphor analysis (Sheehan, Barker, & McCarthy, 2004; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006), the intention here is to both compare the New Zealand ITP workers' experiences to these previous investigations and to address certain methodological shortcomings of those studies. The identification of the extent of bullying, and the associated practical and emotional experiences, provides a useful contribution to the literature and insight for practitioners to improve the management of bullying.

#### **1.4. Organisation of the thesis**

The study is organised as follows. Chapter 2 presents a literature review that synthesises the ways in which bullying has been conceptualised and studied by scholars. It defines the terms used in the study, reviews key findings relevant to the study purpose, and presents the research questions and hypotheses. Chapter 3 reviews methodology and methods to explain the philosophical underpinnings, the design of the study, the approach to data collection, and methods of data analysis. The next three chapters provide broad quantitative and in-depth qualitative results. Chapter 4 addresses research question 1, primarily using quantitative results from the Negative Acts Questionnaire to compare the extent of bullying in New Zealand ITPs with findings from Europe. This chapter also explores differences in the extent of bullying experienced amongst groups with different power levels and examines the effects of bullying on job satisfaction and job performance. Chapter 5 addresses research question 2, primarily using a qualitative analysis of interviews to identify the ways in which interviewees construct the experience of bullying and to identify the process that occurs. Chapter 6 addresses research question 3, using metaphor analysis to identify emotional responses to bullying. Finally, chapter 7 presents a discussion of the key findings and overall conclusions. The next chapter presents a review of literature.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The goal of the literature review is to synthesise the research on workplace bullying in order to inform and guide the present investigation. The focus of the study moves from a broad overview of bullying behaviours to an investigation of the bullying process, followed by an in-depth analysis of the personal emotions bullying evokes in targets. Therefore, the literature review includes a discussion of the definition, participants, behaviours, processes, antecedents, outcomes, and external responses to the phenomenon, followed by a discussion of metaphors and emotions, and their use in explaining workplace bullying. The final section of this chapter presents three research questions and seven hypotheses.

#### **2.1. Conceptualising bullying**

Scholarly literature describes bullying in a variety of ways. My goal in this section is to identify the characteristics of bullying and clarify the terms used in the present investigation. Although there is no agreed definition of workplace *bullying*, a number of variations exist. For example, Salin (2003b) defined bullying as “Repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more individual(s), which involve a perceived power imbalance and create a hostile work environment. Bullying is thus a form of interpersonal aggression or hostile anti-social behaviour in the workplace” (p.1214). Other scholars used the term bullying to describe repeated, malicious verbal mistreatment and deliberate humiliation of a person leading to harm (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Einarsen, 1999; Field, 1996; Lee, 2000; Lewis, 2006; Namie & Namie, 2000; Rayner & Cooper, 1997, 2003). The common elements of these definitions are repeated, hostile, and harmful acts in the workplace. Thus, for the purposes of the present study, and as a bare minimum, bullying is defined as repeated, hostile acts that are harmful to the recipient. The following sections discuss other factors.

In addition to the absence of an agreed definition of bullying, scholars have used several different terms that denote processes either synonymous with, or very similar to, bullying. For example, Keashly (1998) used *emotional abuse* to

include verbal abuse, name-calling, threats of job loss, silent treatment, and ridicule that lead to humiliation and psychological distress (e.g., anger, fear, stress, depression) for the recipient, whilst Lutgen-Sandvik (2003) used it to refer to repetitive, targeted, and destructive forms of communication. Other terms such as *mistreatment* (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003), *generalised workplace harassment* (Namie & Namie, 2000), *hostile workplace behaviour* (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003), *desk rage* (Gardener & Johnson, 2001), *job rage* (Ramsey, 2002), *negative behaviour at work* (Rayner & Cooper, 2003), and *premeditated workplace aggression* (Randall, 1997) have been used. Still other terms include *incivility and disrespectful behaviour* (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003; Pearson & Porath, 2005), *corporate abuse* (Needham, 2003), *psychical terror* (Leymann, 1990), and *mobbing* (Gardener & Johnson, 2001; Leymann, 1990; Namie & Namie, 2000; Niedl, 1996; Stohl & Schell, 1991). Typically, the literature treats these terms as alternative labels for bullying. Furthermore, distinctions among these terms are somewhat ambiguous and often overlap.

One of the most frequently used alternative terms is *mobbing*. Einarsen (1999) considered the terms bullying and mobbing to be interchangeable, and some scholars treat them in this way (e.g., Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003; Niedl, 1996; Vartia, 1996; Zapf, 1999). However, Leymann (1990) used mobbing to describe systematic undermining of a colleague by teasing, name-calling, and isolation by a *group* that lead to the worker's performance declining, and the person's eventual expulsion from the workplace. Subsequently, an alternative argument has emerged for reserving the term mobbing to describe bullying by *multiple* perpetrators rather than individuals and to differentiate mobbing as a specific type of bullying (Davenport et al., 1999; Shallcross, 2003).

In research from New Zealand, bullying has become a recognised term for the process that leads to a pattern of suffering (Ayling, 2002; Catley et al., 2010; Needham, 2003; O'Driscoll et al., 2010a; O'Driscoll et al., 2010b; Olsen, 2003). For consistency, I will use the term *bullying* throughout this thesis, unless discussing groups of perpetrators, when I will use *mobbing*.

There is greater consensus amongst scholars regarding the terms used for labelling people involved in bullying. Typically, scholars label recipients of bullying behaviours *targets* because they are the focus of negative behaviours (Ayling, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003). The term avoids any

stigma that “victim” may confer and targets have agreed that the term is an appropriate way to describe their selection (Tracy et al., 2006). In addition, some targets have viewed the adoption of this term, despite its potentially pejorative nature, as a form of resistance to bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Therefore, this thesis calls recipients of bullying *targets*. Scholars have termed people who carry out bullying behaviours *perpetrators* because they indulge in, or perpetrate, negative behaviours (Namie & Namie, 2000; Shallcross 2003). The use of the term *bully* as a label is potentially emotive, so this tends to be avoided (Lewis 2001). For consistency, this thesis labels those who carry out negative behaviours that lead to bullying *perpetrators*.

Bullying occurs in three directions, (1) downwards from managers and supervisors, (2) upwards from subordinates, and (3) laterally from colleagues. Several studies have reported that perpetrators tend to be in positions that are senior to targets (e.g., Einarsen, 1999; Lee, 2000; Namie & Namie, 2000; Rayner, 1999). However, other studies have identified horizontal bullying by colleagues (e.g., Branch, Sheehan, Barker, & Ramsey, 2004; Leymann, 1990), and upwards bullying by subordinates (e.g., Branch, Ramsey, & Barker, 2006; Branch et al. 2004; Rayner & Cooper, 2003; Shallcross, 2003). In order to differentiate between the different directions, this study uses three separate terms. Bullying by perpetrators who are senior to the target is termed *downward bullying*, bullying by colleagues, or people at an equivalent level in an organisation’s hierarchy is *horizontal bullying*, whilst bullying by subordinates is *upward bullying*.

In summary, this thesis uses the term bullying to refer to the negative actions of individuals and mobbing to refer to the actions of groups. People who become the focus of the bullying process are termed targets, whilst those who initiate and participate in the bullying process are perpetrators. The terms upwards, horizontal, and downwards indicate the relationship between the perpetrator and target. The next section discusses behaviours that may contribute to the bullying process.

### **2.1.1. Bullying behaviours**

Identifying bullying behaviours is necessary for conceptualising the bullying process. Scholars have offered a variety of views as to what constitutes bullying behaviours and generally agree that bullying encompasses all types of harassment

at work. Lists of bullying behaviours include shouting, unreasonable demands, personalised rudeness, silent treatment, rumours, undermining and hostile behaviours (Field, 1996; Lee, 2000; Namie & Namie, 2000). Keashly (1998) produced a particularly useful guide, organising possible bullying behaviours into types, by distinguishing the underlying dimensions of verbal-physical, active-passive, and direct-indirect, as shown in table 1:

Table 1  
*Types of Bullying Behaviour*

---

<u>Verbal/active/direct behaviours</u>
Target is called by derogatory terms, subjected to insulting jokes
Target is belittled intellectually, pressured to change personal life, beliefs, opinions
Target is criticised harshly, attacked verbally and put down in private or public
Target is sworn at, lied to, deceived, shouted at, interrupted when speaking and working
Target is subjected to status flaunting by the perpetrator
<u>Verbal/active/indirect behaviours</u>
Target treated unfairly and the subject of false accusations and rumours
Perpetrator attempts to turn others against the target
<u>Verbal/passive/direct behaviours</u>
Target's contributions are ignored and perpetrator will not speak to the target
<u>Verbal/passive/indirect behaviours</u>
Target's memos, telephone calls ignored, and the target deliberately excluded from meetings
Target given little or no feedback or guidance on work
Perpetrator failed to pass on information needed by the target
<u>Physical/active/direct behaviours</u>
Target glared at by perpetrator
<u>Physical/active/indirect behaviours</u>
Theft or destruction of target's property by the perpetrator
Perpetrator deliberately assigns work overload for the target
Perpetrator deliberately consumes resources needed by target
<u>Physical/passive/indirect behaviours</u>
Target is expected to work with unreasonable deadlines and a lack of resources
Perpetrator causes others to delay action on matters of importance to target

---

*Note.* Adapted from Keashly (1998)

A survey tool is widely used for measuring bullying. The Negative Acts Questionnaire (Bergen Bullying Research Group) incorporates a broad range of

hostile behaviours, similar to those in table 1. This survey has 29 questions about hostile verbal, physical, and work-related acts that indicate the breadth of potential bullying behaviours. Since bullying is comprised of a variety of repeated negative acts, the different types of behaviours are often combined (Tracy et al., 2006). Therefore, bullying is conceptualised as incorporating a broad range of acts. However, for the purpose of analysis, there is a case for treating some types of negative behaviours separately from bullying.

### **2.1.2. Behaviours excluded from bullying**

There is disagreement amongst scholars as to whether physical violence, sexual harassment, and racial harassment should be treated as bullying. The sections below discuss the treatment of these behaviours in the literature.

#### ***2.1.2.1. Violence***

Physical violence is included in some of the original definitions of bullying (e.g., Adams & Crawford, 1992; Leymann, 1990). However, acts of physical violence are relatively rare in the workplace (Baron & Neuman, 1996, 1998) and tend to involve participants from outside the organisation rather than co-workers (Salin, 2003b), for example, students attacking teachers (Lee, 2003). Less violent forms of physical contact that may be experienced within an organisation, such as pushing that does not lead to injury, might be considered bullying if this was part of a broader process. Although violence is important, generally it has clear and serious consequences for the culprit in the workplace, such as loss of job and/or criminal charges (Baron & Neuman, 1996), so this thesis treats violence as a separate construct from bullying.

#### ***2.1.2.2. Sexual and racial harassment***

The constructs of sexual and racial harassment have had recognition for many years, and consequently bodies of research have developed to enhance understanding. Furthermore, legislation is in place to assist with management of these areas (Field, 1996), including in New Zealand. Although definitions of harassment may overlap, treating bullying separately provides an alternative outlet for those who cannot articulate their experiences through the existing constructs (Field, 1996). However, some types of gendered harassment could fall into the category of bullying, for example, when a person becomes a target owing to his or

her sex but the behaviour is not sexual in nature (Miller, 1997). This thesis treats sexual and racial harassment as related, but separate, constructs and thus excludes them from direct consideration.

### **2.1.3. Harmful consequences**

The behaviours used to describe bullying in table 1 are so wide ranging that it seems likely that everyone could exhibit and/or experience some of them from time to time (Field, 1996). Consequently, scholars argue that targets must experience *harm* or a negative effect for bullying to have taken place (Lee, 2000; Namie & Namie, 2000; Quine, 1999; Randall, 1997). Harmful effects include feeling distress and exhibiting signs of stress, such as headaches, insomnia, inability to concentrate, and in some cases Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Lee, 2000; Leymann, 1990). Indeed, Namie and Namie (2000) posited that without harm, bullying has not taken place and this seems to be a reasonable approach for conceptualising this phenomenon.

### **2.1.4. Intention to cause harm**

Scholars differ in their requirement for bullying behaviours to have an express intention of causing harm. For example, one definition states, “Bullying is the aggressive behaviour arising from the deliberate intent to cause physical or psychological distress to others” (Randall, 1997, p. 4). This view is consistent with the treatment of bullying by a British union. Lee (2000) found that the union treated day-to-day conflicts and problems in working relations as part of the normal working environment, unless there was a specific intent to harm or offend. However, the requirement of intent to harm presents a risk that bullying may remain unmanaged, owing to the difficulty of detection. Perpetrators, for example, may explain the action as a joke that they meant to be fun. In addition, intent may be very difficult to establish unless a perpetrator admits to deliberately aiming to cause harm (Keashly, 2001). Other scholars have argued that intent to cause harm should not be a requirement for accepting that bullying has occurred because the impact on targets, and organisations, is so serious (Field, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000). Thus, in the present study, harm is necessary for bullying to have occurred, but intent to harm does not need to be established.

### **2.1.5. Labelling and mislabelling**

Behaviours can be conceptualised as bullying whether or not targets choose to label them as such. Keashly (2001) noted that negative consequences occur from repeated negative acts regardless of their labels. Dick and Rayner (2004) studied 761 UK public sector union members, and found that targets reported harm without acknowledging or realising that bullying was taking place, which provided support for the view that labels are unnecessary. Even when targets know what is happening they may choose to frame their experiences in other terms (Clair, 1993). Scholars have found that targets have reasons for not labelling repeated negative acts as bullying, and they may attribute the harm to other factors, such as personal pressures, rather than damage their self-esteem by admitting to being bullied (Björkqvist, Österman, & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994). Furthermore, targets may consciously reject the victim role because they see it as representing weakness and passivity (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001, Miller, 1997). Although, in the short term, denial may be a helpful coping mechanism, in the longer term, it may delay action and worsen the situation for the target (Namie & Namie, 2000). Finally, there is a likelihood of under-reporting if targets avoid labelling themselves as such (Namie & Namie, 2000). Overall, relying on targets to label their experiences creates difficulties for both researchers and practitioners, and therefore this is not a requirement for conceptualising bullying in this study.

Just as labelling may create difficulties, so can mislabelling. Sometimes workers use the term bullying to describe general conflicts with co-workers (Standen & Omari, 2009) or management actions that they perceive as inappropriate (Liefoghe & Mackenzie Davey, 2001). Using the term in these ways may reflect an inability to articulate dissatisfaction with their workplace or a strategic attempt to frame a person or event in particularly harsh terms. However, if the situations lack the defining features of bullying, such as harm and repetition, and appear to be conceptually distinct from bullying, using the term in this way may be a form of mislabelling. Awareness of alternative uses of the term is useful, because it highlights some of the complexity surrounding the conceptualisation of bullying. However, in this thesis the definition of bullying excludes situations that lack focused abusive behaviours, harm, and repetition.

## **2.1.6. Persistence of bullying behaviours**

Scholars also differ in their views of whether bullying may constitute a one-off instance of negative behaviour or whether multiple incidents are required.

### ***2.1.6.1. Multiple incidents***

Typically, scholars require persistent actions and continual attacks on the target's self-confidence, leading to the target experiencing prolonged suffering, for bullying to have occurred (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Bray, 1999; Einarsen, 1999; Field, 1996; Keashly, 1998; Lee, 2000; Leymann, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000). Lee (2000) borrowed the term "dripping tap approach" from the sexual harassment literature to describe the way in which seemingly trivial incidents may collectively constitute bullying (p. 606). Furthermore, the pattern of negative behaviours could be useful for indicating whether a person was a target of bullying (Bassman, 1992) and the Negative Acts Questionnaire reflects this requirement by defining bullying as consisting of repeated negative acts (Bergen Bullying Research Group, n.d.). Finally, requiring bullying to comprise multiple incidents is practically helpful in preventing rash claims that could damage unwitting perpetrators of individual acts.

### ***2.1.6.2. Individual incidents***

Despite the arguments for requiring bullying to be comprised of multiple incidents, some scholars proposed that negative behaviours do not have to be regular or repeated to be bullying (Lee, 2000; Randall, 1997). Lee (2000) recommended labelling major "sledgehammer" (p. 606) and minor one-off incidents as bullying. Single acts of substantial aggression may be easier to define than subtle and insidious behaviours associated with prolonged bullying (e.g., gossip and undermining), and as a result, practitioners and targets may be able to implement remedies more readily. Furthermore, other scholars (e.g., Davenport et al., 1999; Leymann, 1990; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003) note that an initial incident triggers the more prolonged bullying process, so treating single incidents as bullying may allow early intervention and reduce future suffering. Finally, it has been suggested that certain behaviours, such as banishment to an uncomfortable or isolated work environment or a single rumour that causes ongoing distress should be considered more broadly and accepted as forms of bullying (Einarsen,

Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2010). These views indicate that acknowledging single acts as potential bullying could provide practical benefits to both targets and organisations.

Overall, there are strong arguments for conceptualising bullying as both comprising single and repeated acts. However, for the purpose of this thesis the bullying process will be conceptualised as comprising only *repeated* acts. The primary rationale for this choice is that bullying often involves insidious, seemingly minor, behaviours that are hard to identify individually and thus more difficult to manage. Furthermore, it ensures that the thesis does not focus on one-off incidents that might distort or otherwise confuse the nature and consequences the bullying process, as discussed in section 2.3.

### **2.1.7. Time limits**

Some scholars have specified periods in which behaviours are required to have occurred in order to label them bullying. For example, Bjorkqvist et al. (1994) and the Bergen Bullying Research Group require behaviours to have occurred *within* the last six months, whilst Leymann (1996) requires the behaviours to occur *at least* weekly and create a persistent problem for a minimum of six months to constitute bullying. While these attempts at specificity are commendable, the choice of these particular periods seems somewhat arbitrary (Notelaers, Einarsen, de Witte, & Vermunt, 2006). The target may feel compelled to interpret other behaviours that they might not previously have seen as bullying as negative, if there is a requirement for a prolonged experience in order to use the bullying label (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). For the purposes of the present study, no time limit is set for the qualitative section, whilst the quantitative section uses the Negative Acts Questionnaire and conforms to requirement for the acts to have taken place within the previous six months (Leymann, 1996).

In summary, bullying is conceptualised as a phenomenon that requires a perpetrator to use multiple negative behaviours that cause a target to suffer harm, regardless of whether this was the intent of the acts. The behaviour may be direct or indirect, active or passive, and verbal or non-verbal, but it must be persistent.

## 2.2. Measurement

The wide range of criteria incorporated in the conceptualisation of bullying make measurement a difficult task (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper, 2003). One of the reasons for this difficulty is the subtle and/or subversive character of some of the behaviours (e.g., rumours or ostracism), so bullying cannot necessarily be objectively observed. Furthermore, even when behaviour can be observed, witnesses may not understand the implications of behaviours or the subsequent impact on the target (Hoel & Beale, 2006; Niedl, 1996). Indeed, witnesses may rationalise bullying behaviour as reasonable treatment or the fault of the target (Einarsen et al., 2003)

In order to overcome these difficulties, studies typically adopt two approaches to the measurement of bullying. These have been labelled the *operational* (Notelaers et al., 2006) and *subjective* (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003) approaches. For example, the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) begins with an operational approach, requiring respondents to state how often they have experienced a range of negative behaviours listed in an inventory of up to 29 items. The NAQ then uses a subjective approach and asks respondents to indicate whether they believe they have been bullied according to a definition of bullying.

Exposure to bullying may then be operationalised by the criteria of experiencing at least one negative act weekly within a six-month period, as recommended by Leymann (1996) and this is calculated by combining the weekly and daily acts reported in the NAQ (Cemaloglu, 2007; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen 2001, 2002). Some scholars argue that the requirement for at least weekly acts is insufficiently stringent and they have made a case for the use of more frequent negative acts, for example, a minimum of two or more per week, to constitute an objective measure of bullying (Agervold, 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). Conversely, other scholars take issue with less frequent acts being ignored because respondents may have experienced a wide range of negative acts whose total equals or exceeds number of acts that a person who has been subjected to the same act many times (Notelaers et al., 2006), but these respondents' experiences are excluded from the measure. This exclusion has the potential for under-reporting of bullying. In the present study, the criteria of

experiencing at least one negative act weekly within a six-month period has been adopted, as it provides a middle ground between competing scholarly view points.

The second approach, the subjective approach, relies on the target's self-assessment of whether bullying has occurred (Agervold, 2007) and enables the respondent to communicate the effect of their interactions with their co-workers (Einarsen, 2000). Respondents read a definition of bullying then indicate whether they consider themselves to have been bullied. This approach has the advantage of assisting the target to understand what has been happening to them (Agervold, 2007). However, the measure has been criticised for failing to provide any assurance that respondents are using the definition supplied and not providing their own version (Cowie et al., 2002). Furthermore, respondents may be biased against labelling themselves as bullied (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994), perhaps owing to a perceived stigma, or they may be unaware that their experiences constitute bullying (Cowie et al., 2002; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2007; Rayner et al., 2002). Consequently there is a risk of under-reporting (Agervold, 2007).

Whilst both of these approaches have been credited with highlighting the issue of bullying, there has been concern about reliance on these methods of gathering data (Bentley et al., 2009). Specifically, inventories of behavioural items are unlikely to be exhaustive (Salin, 2001) and there is no opportunity in the NAQ for the respondent to communicate the impact of the exposure (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). Clearly, survey measurement has its limitations and as a consequence scholars have recommended the adoption of a range of approaches, including interviews, and diaries to improve the reliability of findings (Cowie et al., 2002). Finally, one partial solution to the difficulties of gathering data may be to combine approaches, an approach taken in the present study.

### **2.3. Bullying as a process**

As discussed in section 2.1.1., individual negative behaviours do not constitute bullying, but they do play an important part in the complex interactions that constitute the *process* of bullying (Einarsen et al., 2003; Lewis, 2006). Typically, the bullying process has been conceptualised as involving a number of phases: from an initial conflict or interaction, to an ensuing range of bullying behaviours, followed by the target's removal from the workplace. During this time, the target

moves through phases of disbelief or denial and eventually becomes exhausted by the process, whilst those in positions of authority typically do not manage the situation appropriately and the support of colleagues dwindles (Davenport et al., 1999; Einarsen, 1999; Leymann, 1990; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003).

Leymann (1990) developed a four phase process model, based on a case study, to show how bullying by a mob of colleagues starts, develops, and finishes. He called the stages Critical Events, as shown in table 2.

Table 2

*The Structure of Critical Events: From mobbing to expulsion*

---

Phase 1 – Selection

Critical incident - the target draws attention to him or her self

Phase 2 – Behaviours

Bullying behaviours used consistently over a long period

Phase 3 – Target reaction

The perpetrator's behaviours disturb the target and his or her work suffers, resulting in managers treating the target as a problem worker

Phase 4 – Expulsion

The organisation expels the target possibly after long-term sick leave, by dismissal or other arrangement

---

*Note.* Adapted from Leymann (1990)

Leymann (1990) explained that problems sometimes emerge from mutual conflict and this becomes mobbing when one side gains a position of greater power. When this happens, the other person loses his or her coping resources, and is unable to reciprocate. Consequently, the weaker party becomes a target, as in phase 1, and the process starts. However, reciprocation is not always an option in conflict, because there may be a real or perceived imbalance of power between the parties (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Lee, 2000). A subsequent extension to the model reflected the imbalance of power. Davenport et al. (1999) added a phase between 3 and 4. In the new phase, managers label the target as difficult or mentally ill, then attribution of blame for the problems rests with the target, which neatly leads into his or her expulsion from the organisation.

Lutgen-Sandvik (2003) developed the work of Leymann (1990) by focussing on downward bullying. She produced a conceptual model using extant

research and her own experience of intervening in supervisor-subordinate disputes in two organisations. Her model offered a slightly different take on the bullying process by presenting the target as an unwilling participant in a recurring cycle of abuse that the organisation supports, as illustrated in table 3. In phase 2 of this model, perpetrators in positions of authority can abuse their power under the auspices of performance management, in both formal processes and in day-to-day supervision. Owing to their superior position in the organisations, supervisors are able to frame events in terms that suit their objectives but that may not reflect the target's experience of the situation. Targets' ability to respond is restricted, as they rarely control what is contained in personal and/or personnel files. Furthermore, targets usually have little opportunity to amend comments made by superiors owing to power imbalances and possibly a lack of suitable language. As the process continues, the target loses the support of his or her co-workers, who fear they will become a target too, and friends and family tire of the situation.

Table 3

*The Communicative Generation and Regeneration of Employee Emotional Abuse*

- 
1. Initial incident – Cycle generation  
Target attracts negative attention. Organisational pressure increases.
  2. Progressive discipline  
Organisation meets legal requirements of due process.
  3. Turning point  
Repetition, reframing, branding. Target seeks support and corroboration.
  4. Organisational ambivalence  
Upper management hears of abuse. Responses vary.
  5. Isolation/silencing  
Peer/family support withdrawn. Target and audience may be silenced.
  6. Expulsion cycle  
Regeneration, target quits, is fired, transferred, takes extended sick leave.  
New target emerges. Return to phase 1.
- 

*Note.* Adapted from Lutgen-Sandvik 2003

Again, as with Leymann's process, the final phase is expulsion. However, the cycle then regenerates when the perpetrator turns his or her attention to another person, thus starting the process again. The existence of regenerative cycles was also noted by Adams (1992), Field (1996), Namie and Namie (2000),

and Needham (2003). The processes above indicate that bullying is much more than a one off event or a series of unrelated actions.

The use of process models may be particularly helpful for overcoming some of the difficulties posed by *correspondence bias*. This occurs when observers have difficulty recognising a situation from the perspective of the person involved and consequently the situation becomes *invisible* to them (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Correspondence bias is an issue for those not immediately involved in the process. Consequently, bullying may be invisible to managers, and others responsible for resolving it, because they may not have experienced such problems and may find it impossible to understand the situation from the target's perspective (Branch et al., 2006). Therefore, the models provide an opportunity to gain an insight into the experiences of targets.

Although the existing process models are useful, they do have limitations. Primarily, neither appears to have a strong empirical foundation, that is, a systematic analysis of bullying incidents. Additionally, conceptualizations of the directionality, precipitating processes, resistance, and outcomes of the bullying processes are limited. Leymann's model defines directionality narrowly, as horizontal bullying in the form of mobbing by colleagues, whilst the Lutgen-Sandvik model concentrates on abusive behaviour from supervisors. Neither model applies to those who experience upward bullying from subordinates. The models also have limited recognition of the precipitating processes that encourage bullying and enable it to thrive, thus rendering them somewhat acontextual. In addition, resistance by targets, and the constraints they face when resisting bullying, receive scant attention in both models. That is, the range of responses from targets, as depicted in the two models, is perhaps unduly limited. Finally, both models seem quite narrow in the range of outcomes identified. The only outcome acknowledged is the departure of the target. However, it seems likely that other outcomes are possible. A more comprehensive model that incorporates the context and a broader range of experiences of workplace bullying appears to be required.

In summary, the literature depicts bullying as a process that has distinct stages, from the initial selection of a target, followed by the weakening and undermining, through to the eventual removal of the target from the workgroup. The process may restart with a new target. Existing process models are helpful in

giving insight into bullying, but have limitations in their application. Empirical work could usefully assess the robustness of these models and refine them.

## **2.4. Antecedents of bullying**

This section reviews the literature associated with the characteristics of organisations and participants. It considers the organisational and personal qualities that may influence the likelihood of the bullying process commencing.

### **2.4.1. Characteristics of organisations**

The nature of the workplace may influence the development and perpetuation of bullying. In the following section, both positive and negative workplace characteristics are considered.

Lee (2000) argued that well-organized, respectful workplaces manage negative behaviour and potentially abusive situations; consequently, these organisations do not suffer from destructive relationships, such as those that result in bullying. As evidence, Vartia (1996) surveyed 949 Finnish municipal workers and found that workplaces with a consultative approach to problem solving, where the views of the employees were taken in to account, information flowed freely, and the goals of the work group were mutually agreed, had fewer workers who claimed that they had been bullied. She found the reverse in organisations with more authoritarian approaches to organising work, and these had higher levels of people who claimed to have been subject to bullying. This research suggests that respectful workplaces may be less likely to support the existence of bullying.

Conversely, hectic, competitive, and high-pressure environments may be more likely to provide a suitable environment for bullying to thrive (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001). In recent years, the introduction of technology, including systems such as Just-in-Time, Enterprise Resource Planning, and Business Process Reengineering, has increased the amount of work that employees are required to carry out and this adds to the intensity of the workplace (Green, 2004). For example, based on interviews with 20 higher education personnel officers and trade union officials in Wales, Lewis (1999) found that all interviewees believed that pressures on management were the main cause of bullying behaviour. Furthermore, in a survey of 377 Finnish business professionals, Salin (2003a) found pressure to restructure public organisations led

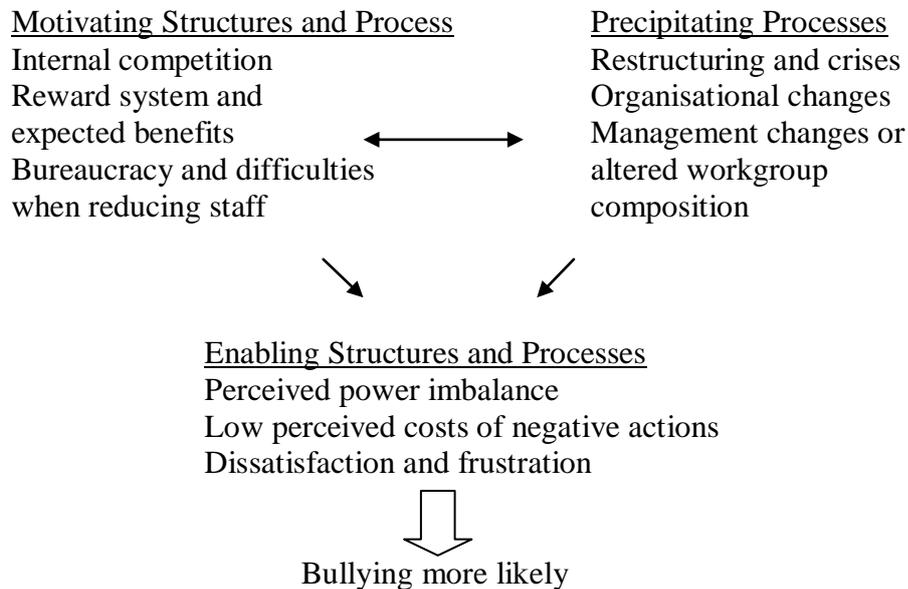
to the use of bullying as a way of circumventing regulations that protected permanent staff from redundancy. Thus, changes in the ways organisations expect to do business may increase the likelihood of bullying.

Some scholars have linked leadership styles to bullying. Certain organisations, such as prisons and armies, have cultures that positively encourage power imbalances with forceful leadership and may implicitly condone institutionalized bullying (Salin, 2003b). However, weak leadership, where upper management fails to set and implement appropriate behaviour standards, also effectively supports bullying (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003). For example, failing to manage basic courtesy amongst employees may create an appropriate environment for workplace bullying to occur (Pearson & Porath, 2005). When organisations condone incivility amongst employees they may tacitly contribute to a reciprocal spiral of verbal abuse that can ultimately lead to aggression (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

A further way that weak leadership may encourage bullying is through the delegation of responsibility to semi-autonomous teams without regulating the associated power. Bullying may occur as group team members seek to increase performance but are unwilling or unable to manage without the use of abusive tactics (Kräkel, 1997, as cited in Salin, 2003b). When organisations do not attempt to manage bullying, perpetrators have little incentive to stop the behaviours. Furthermore, a low likelihood of punishment for the behaviour, or a potential gain, such as an increased share of profits, may encourage bullying behaviour, as it presents little risk for the perpetrator (Salin, 2003a, 2003b). Björkqvist et al. (1994) proposed that leaders who do not directly engage in bullying but ignore or condone it within their organisations are still responsible for allowing bullying to occur. Finally, work environments become more negative following bullying and the deteriorating environment provides the setting for yet more inappropriate behaviour (Zapf, 1999).

The findings provide some support for the view that a variety of organisational factors influences the start and continuation of the bullying process. Salin (2003b) proposed a range of enabling structures and processes, as shown in Figure 1. This model provides a summary of the ways in which organisations influence the likelihood of bullying beginning and provide a context for its continuation.

**Figure 1: Enabling Structures and Processes**



Antecedents adapted from Salin, 2003b

In summary, the studies reviewed above show that organisations play an important role in creating an environment where bullying can exist. An absence of effective leadership, combined with a highly competitive environment may provide fertile ground for those who wish to engage in bullying. Therefore, the next section discusses the characteristics of targets and perpetrators.

#### **2.4.2. Characteristics of targets and perpetrators**

Scholars have proposed a number of traits, behavioural tendencies, and other characteristics that may cause certain individuals to be more likely to become targets and perpetrators.

The characteristics of targets may be categorised as both positive and negative. Scholars have described targets as being conscientious, hard workers, who operate with integrity, have well developed interpersonal skills and a tendency to be emotionally intelligent (e.g., Field, 1996; Leymann, 1990; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003). However, targets also may be naïve and lack assertiveness (Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003). To provide some empirical foundation for the role of targets' personality traits in bullying, scholars have conducted various investigations. For example, Coyne, Seigne, and Randall (2000) conducted a survey of 120 workers in two large Irish companies and found

that there were marked differences in the personality traits of the 60 workers who had experienced bullying compared with the associated control group. Targets of bullying tended to display reserve and conscientiousness; they avoided conflict, and behaved in a submissive fashion more often than the non-bullied control-group. Similarly, in a study of bullying amongst UK public sector workers, Lewis (2006) noted that the ten targets she interviewed were conscientious but submissive. She found that they tended to rationalise the difficulties they experienced rather than try to prevent their mistreatment. Finally, a study of 2539 Norwegian employees found that targets were exploitable, nurturing, and distrustful. Scholars proposed that these traits might have contributed to their selection as targets (Glasø, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2009). All three of these studies support the proposal that targets are likely to be conscientious and emotionally intelligent but naïve or lacking in assertiveness; therefore they are unwilling, or perhaps unable, to take control of their situation.

Finally, a study from New Zealand took a different approach. Burt (2004) surveyed 130 workers from an industrial plant and correlated their responses to questions about jokes with responses to bullying behaviours. He concluded that those who perceive themselves as victims of bullying are less appreciative of humour and are more likely to be offended by jokes and teasing. Thus, sensitivity on the part of the employee makes them more likely to become targets.

All of these studies suggest that the personalities or behavioural tendencies of targets may have contributed to their selection for bullying. Both the positive characteristics, such as conscientiousness and emotional intelligence, and the negative characteristics, such as naïveté, sensitivity to teasing, lack of assertiveness, and a willingness to rationalize the inappropriate behaviour, enhanced the likelihood of bullying occurring. However, a key criticism of these studies is that they occurred after the bullying had taken place and thus, reverse causality is possible. That is, the effects of the bullying experience may affect a person's attitudes and behavioural tendencies (Leymann, 1996). For example, it is easy to imagine that someone could become more sensitive to teasing and behave in a non-assertive manner after experiencing bullying. Until the findings of longitudinal studies are available, it might be wise to treat these findings with caution (Glasø et al., 2009).

Perpetrators are usually characterised solely in negative terms by scholars. They are difficult, lacking sensitivity and people skills, and deficient in their work abilities (Field, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000; O'Moore, Seigne, McGuire, & Smith, 1998). These inadequacies result in perpetrators choosing the people they consider a threat to their position and using bullying behaviours to gain control (Davenport et al., 1999; Field, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003; Randall, 1997). Perpetrators may use the bullying process as revenge, by punishing someone who has become a burden to the work group, perhaps by requiring extra help (Salin, 2003a); whilst others may gain self-gratification by intentionally demeaning and belittling targets (Field, 1996). Overall, perpetrators are people who persistently make life difficult for others.

However, although some descriptions of perpetrators exist, defining their personality traits is contentious, because the majority of studies have used the perspective of the targets (Vartia, 1996). Gathering information from perpetrators is difficult, as volunteers are unlikely (Rayner & Cooper, 1997) and experiments would almost certainly be unethical (Zimbardo, 2007). So again, it appears that personal characteristic should be used cautiously.

In summary, some scholars support a view that aspects of the personalities of the targets and perpetrators influence the bullying process. However, the findings were from the perspectives of targets and used data collected after bullying had taken place, both of which limit their conclusiveness. These limitations suggest that the findings related to characteristics, while interesting and provocative, may not be sufficiently robust to be used alone as a reliable explanation for bullying.

## **2.5. Organisational position of perpetrators**

Bullying is frequently a problem that involves senior staff members abusing those who work at a lower level in their organisation (downward bullying). In support of this proposal, Einarsen (1999) noted that in Europe, studies reported that the majority of bullying occurred when a more senior staff member was the perpetrator, whilst in the USA, Namie and Namie (2000) say 89% of bullies are “bosses”. These views were also supported by the results of a major British study for a public sector workers’ union (UNISON), which reported that 83% of

respondents who felt they had been bullied had been the subject of bullying by a manager (Rayner, 1999).

However, perpetrators are sometimes from other parts of the organisational hierarchy. A survey of Higher Education workers in the UK provided a less polarised set of results. Hoel and Cooper (2000) reported that of 487 respondents, 21.1% felt they had been bullied in the past 5 years, with 62.9% of these citing perpetrators as supervisors/managers, 51.4% as colleagues, and 11.4% as subordinates. In this study, colleagues were almost as likely to bully as supervisors and managers. Furthermore, the percentages suggest that some people felt bullied by perpetrators from more than one level in the organisation. These findings suggest that bullying may occur in a greater range of circumstances than was previously indicated.

Other studies have noted that groups of subordinate employees, and sometimes colleagues, abuse supervisors and managers (Baron & Neuman, 1998; Branch et al., 2006; Leymann, 1990). For example, an inductive study of resistance in the USA military, reported that male subordinates and colleagues routinely subjected women in senior roles to bullying behaviours because they believed that the women had received unfair promotions or should not be in the military (Miller, 1997). Similarly, in the Australian public sector, Shallcross (2003) interviewed eight female employees and found that women in more junior positions would bully senior women managers. These studies indicate that being in senior organisational position does not automatically provide protection from bullying and supports the view that bullying can happen to anyone (Adams & Crawford, 1992), but women in supervisory positions and above appear to be particularly at risk.

## **2.6. Consequences of bullying**

Bullying has negative impacts on both targets and organisations. This section provides an overview of the effects of the bullying.

### **2.6.1. Effects on targets**

Earlier, this chapter proposed that harm is a defining characteristic of bullying. The current section reviews the ways in which harm can manifest itself and the effects it can have on targets of bullying.

Some studies have reported that that bullying affects targets physically, for example by causing nausea, and behaviourally, for example, leaving targets too frightened to speak (Einarsen et al., 2003; Needham, 2003). Based on interviews with 50 workers from a range of occupations in the UK, who had experienced workplace bullying or been involved in it in some way, Lee (2000) concluded that targets feel upset, threatened, humiliated, or vulnerable, and the bullying behaviours undermine their self-confidence. Scholars have noted that bullying leads to targets suffering psychologically, particularly from stress and an inability to concentrate (Davenport et al., 1999; Field, 1996; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003). Symptoms associated with stress, such as headaches and sleeplessness, have also been associated with bullying (Davenport et al., 1999; Field, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003) as has high blood pressure (Wager, Fieldman, & Hussey, 2003). The effects of bullying are so great that some targets experienced murderous feelings towards perpetrators (Adams & Crawford, 1992). This range of negative effects presents risks for both targets and organisations.

After bullying ceases, stress related problems may still exist for targets. In a study of 2428 members of the Swedish workforce, Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) found that the experiences affected respondents so badly that 64 of them displayed Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS). This form of stress is similar to that experienced by those who have had their lives threatened or been involved in war. PTSS results in the inability to revisit, physically or mentally, the site of the bullying without becoming acutely distressed. Rayner, Hoel, and Cooper (2002) also noted that the effects of bullying were far reaching and targets could become distressed about bullying episodes that they experienced many years earlier.

In summary, the research indicates that there are two classes of effects, (1) psychological and (2) physical, with the overwhelming effects being those generally associated with stress, all of which may create problems for targets and their organisations, sometimes continuing for years after the bullying has ceased.

### **2.6.2. Effects on organisations**

For organisations, bullying represents additional costs through increased sickness, absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and possible litigation. When targets take time

off work, there may be additional costs of sick pay and replacement workers, or overtime, for the organisation, plus a reduction in productivity (Dick & Rayner, 2004; Needham, 2003).

Workplace bullying usually undermines productivity as perpetrators' personal agendas dominate and employees are distracted from legitimate work. Poor performance and decreased productivity may also emerge owing to reduced commitment, creativity, and general loss of morale (Einarsen et al., 2003; Needham, 2003). For example, in a study of 29 people, Keashly (2001) found that targets lost commitment to their employment and did the minimum work to get by. Interestingly, those who witnessed abusive behaviour reported similar levels of anxiety as the target, suggesting that the negative effects could spread throughout organisations (Keashly, 2001; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). Having distressed staff obviously puts pressure on other members of the organisations and may disrupt the work environment. Evidence for this comes from a study of 935 assistant nurses in Norway, which found a significant link between workplace bullying and professional burnout (Einarsen, Matthiesen, & Skogsstad, 1998). Finally, customers have also provided evidence of the negative effects of bullying. In a study of the restaurant sector, organisations with high levels of bullying received lower ratings from customers, suggesting that there may be a connection between bullying and job performance (Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2008).

Retention and recruitment may become issues as organisations gain a reputation for poor treatment of staff (O'Moore et al., 1998). In sectors where people are a source of competitive advantage, such as education, workplace bullying may become very costly (Rayner & Cooper, 1997). Following a review of literature, Glendinning (2001) reported that an abusive organisational environment could be a greater incentive for employees to change jobs—whether or not they are the targets of bullying—than a rise in pay levels. Whilst it is hard to imagine that potential recruits would shun an organisation owing to its poor record of managing bullying, a high level of staff turnover may be a “red flag” that deters potential recruits. Increased resignations are costly and create problems, especially in tight labour markets, where skilled workers are especially in demand.

Once a workplace has an entrenched pattern of negative interaction, it can be difficult if not impossible to disrupt (Rayner et al., 2002). Consequently, resistance may develop amongst targets and witnesses when there are no satisfactory avenues for managing bullying. In a study of targets and witnesses of bullying in USA organisations, privately working to rule, withholding information, refusing additional tasks, character assassination of the perceived perpetrator, and assault fantasies emerged as resistance strategies (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). Therefore, an organisation's failure to manage negative behaviour promptly may lead to reciprocal type actions and ultimately a toxic work environment.

In summary, this section explored the harmful effects of bullying for both individuals and organisations. It was noted that targets and witnesses may become psychologically and physically unwell, which may damage their ability to work and earn a living. Targets may also seek retribution for their ill-treatment through resistance strategies that have a negative effect on the organisation. Organisations may find their costs increasing through a reduction in productivity, whilst concurrently paying more for a sick, de-motivated, and changing workforce.

## **2.7. Strategies for managing bullying**

Scholars have made recommendations for the management of bullying at work for both organisations and targets. These recommendations have generally fallen in two main categories: (1) prevention and (2) remedy.

### **2.7.1. Organisational strategies**

In order to prevent bullying, scholars have proposed that a basic requirement for civil behaviour amongst all employees, regardless of status or special talents, could reduce the likelihood of subsequent, possibly more serious, negative behaviour in the workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Early intervention may reduce the opportunity for incivility to escalate, and it may enable those involved in uncivil interactions to desist with the minimum loss of face (Denenberg & Braverman, 1999). Examining workplace values and norms, and developing a zero-tolerance stance towards abusive behaviour are proposed solutions from Lutgen-Sandvik (2003). To remedy bullying, providing a channel for employees to safely air grievances may act as a way of relieving tension and provide a useful

indicator of workplace stress (Denenberg & Braverman, 1999). Furthermore, chastising abusers may provide a message about the unacceptability of bullying and this may reduce the amount of negative behaviour in future (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003)

Some scholars recommend creating and adopting anti-harassment policies (Ayling, 2003; Baron & Neuman, 1998; Lewis, 2001). Based on surveys of 415 college lecturers' perceptions of bullying in Welsh tertiary institutions, Lewis (2001) advised organisations to invest in training, policy introduction or, at a minimum, to take the matter seriously to avoid costly litigation and a reduction in workplace morale. Unfortunately, the writers provided no evidence of implementation of these recommendations, so whilst they are intuitively appealing, reports of their efficacy are unavailable and they appear to be merely conjecture.

### **2.7.2. Targets' strategies**

Scholars tend to agree on a range of actions that targets should undertake to manage bullying. Advice for targets includes keeping records of all incidents, seeking support from unions and social networks, taking assertiveness training, gaining medical support for stress, considering changing jobs, and finally, negotiating a settlement to compensate for leaving the organisation (e.g., Adams & Crawford, 1992; Field, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000).

All of the examples above represent coping strategies that enable the target to manage, minimise, and ultimately escape the impact of bullying, but these strategies do not provide any opportunity to address or remove the underlying problem. Indeed, scholars reported that attempting to address the situation with either the perpetrator or managers often makes matters worse for the target (Davenport et al., 1999; Field, 1996; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003). The emphasis on minimising the impact of bullying places additional responsibility on the target, whose health and wellbeing are likely to be undermined already. However, where targets did take action, they reported slightly better outcomes when resisting the perpetrator collectively and appealing to authoritative, expert sources to fight bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006).

All of the approaches in this section remove the focus from the organisation and place it on the individual. Although the approaches may be useful as coping strategies, without the supportive framework of policies and managers' willingness to address the issues, bullying is unlikely to be resolved. Currently, New Zealand businesses have only limited requirements to manage bullying at work. Therefore, the next section provides a review of the legal status of the phenomenon.

## **2.8. Legal developments**

In many countries, laws have developed to protect people from unfair treatment based on personal characteristics, for example, race, sex, age, and disability, that could result in them being more susceptible to mistreatment. Protection for targets of bullying, arguably a form of non-specific unfairness, is slowly appearing. Sweden was the first country to legislate specifically against bullying in the workplace (Ayling, 2003). The Swedish National Board of Occupational Safety and Health considered that victimization, which is synonymous with bullying in this context, is detrimental to employees' wellbeing and workers require legal protection from the actions of individuals and groups. Other European countries, including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, and The Netherlands have provided a range of regulatory responses to deal with forms of workplace aggression, including bullying (Shallcross, 2003).

British journalist Adams originally raised public awareness of adult bullying via the BBC in 1992. Subsequently, the UK introduced a Dignity at Work Bill that created a legal requirement for employers to provide a safe place of work. Despite two attempts, this bill has yet to reach the statute books. However, some general legislative support is available under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (Di Martino, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003). Finally, existing safety legislation affords some protection in the UK, Ireland, and Australia (Shallcross, 2003).

In Europe, the Commission for European Communities developed guidelines for managing bullying, and in 1998, the International Labour Organisation produced a definition of bullying, whilst Australia and the USA have developed codes to assist employers (Ayling, 2002). A number of anti-bullying groups have developed around the world to provide support for targets, give

guidance to employers and, in the UK, to lobby for new legislation. In New Zealand, no specific legislation exists to protect employees from workplace bullying. However, the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, amended in 2002, requires employers to take all practicable steps to identify all hazards and eliminate or reduce their significance. The Occupational Safety and Health Service provides advice on violence at work, which includes harassment, and threatening behaviour that leads to mental and physical suffering. Violence can be from a range of sources, including colleagues and managers (Department of Labour, 2002). The ACC (Accident Compensation Commission) website refers to workplace bullying and gives some general guidelines for management. However, the emphasis is on preventing violence rather than the more subtle behaviours that typically constitute bullying.

Whilst legal protection can provide final closure and possibly some remedy for targets, using the law is likely to be a last resort owing to the expense and effort needed to lodge cases. However, although studies have yet to examine the effects of legal protection, specific legislation may help to raise the profile of the problem and encourage employers to manage bullying.

In summary, the review of workplace bullying literature in the preceding sections provides a foundation for the current study. The next section provides a review of the literature specifically underpinning the qualitative analysis of metaphors and emotions.

## **2.9. Metaphors and the emotional experience of bullying**

This section moves from the more tangible, pragmatic aspects of bullying to its personal manifestations in the form of emotions. One way of identifying emotions is through the examination of metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1997; Steger, 2007). The section below contains a review of the definitions and uses of metaphors, followed by a review of existing literature.

### **2.9.1. Definitions and use of metaphors**

Metaphors are literary devices that appear regularly in communication. They describe objects and events by comparing two unlike things and emphasising a point of similarity (Morgan, 1997). Metaphors provide a compact method of conveying meaning and may be a useful substitute for lengthy descriptions

(Orton, 1975; Sackmann, 1989). Most importantly for the present study, metaphors may describe feelings and emotions in tangible terms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1997). By generating imagery, usually of situations or entities that will be familiar to the listener, metaphors permit communication to go beyond the literal meaning of the words and they enable the user to convey vividness and strength of emotion (Chandler, 2001; Orton, 1975). The listener should be able to interpret the situation after receiving minimal detail and quickly begin to empathise with the feelings these images create.

Metaphors rely on references to objects or experiences other than those being discussed (Morgan, 1980). To infer the message, it is essential to sift the meaning from metaphors. Therefore, the focus must be on the attributes that emphasise the salient elements of experience and suppress the irrelevant parts (Glucksberg & McGlone, 1999). For example, if a distressed person said she was on a desert island, the listener might concentrate on the sense of isolation, loneliness, and possible fear in the message, and suppress any positive ideas of, for example, potential holiday destinations. Placing the metaphor in the frame, or broader context, of the background story often indicates the sense in which the metaphor is to be interpreted (Davidson, 1978; Steger, 2007).

Much of the time, metaphors and figures of speech are routinely used and comments such as “going up in the world” or “treading on thin ice” become part of normal language. Metaphors “die” when they are no longer noticed and this can limit the ways in which experiences are viewed, as the death of metaphors may result in a failure to challenge dominant ways of thinking within society (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Fortunately, new metaphors have the power to create a new reality. Generative metaphors are those that provide a new perspective, or frame, for looking at experiences, and thus they create new perceptions, explanations, and inventions that enable the naming and framing of problems (Schon, 1979). Thus, generative metaphors may be a useful mechanism for managing organisational difficulties.

Morgan (1980) drew attention to the historical use of metaphor to theorise organisations, by describing them, for example, as machines and organisms. With a more applied focus, Sackmann (1989) emphasised the role of metaphors in creating change and transforming organisations. Scholars’ use of metaphors to study behaviour in organisations has provided the opportunity to view the

workings of organisations in ways that might not normally be available (Putnam, Phillips, & Chapman, 1999). Overall, metaphors appear to offer a promising avenue for investigating workplace bullying.

### **2.9.2. Metaphors of bullying**

As noted earlier in this chapter, the impact of bullying may be difficult to communicate, owing to correspondence bias and invisibility. The features of metaphors—compactness, vividness and emotion—are well suited to understanding the feelings experienced by targets of bullying, because such features provide a way of distilling complex experiences into more tangible images. Investigating the emotional experience of bullying, that is, how it feels to targets, helps to contextualise, enrich, and augment existing studies (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2004; Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003; Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Tracey et al., 2006).

Two studies of workplace bullying used metaphors to identify how bullying feels for targets. In the first study, scholars asked participants to describe their experiences in metaphorical terms (Sheehan et al., 2004). They noted that participants in interviews found producing metaphors on request very difficult and consequently the “forced” responses they obtained were disappointing. Despite the difficulties, they managed to identify a number of metaphors capturing the emotional experience of bullying. Participants used drowning, struggling, and being trapped to describe the process; whilst they described perpetrators as two-faced, and saw themselves as trapped in a bad dream, a vulnerable target for arrows, and unimportant speck of dirt.

In a subsequent study, Tracy et al. (2006) analysed the metaphors that targets used naturally in their descriptions of bullying experiences in order to understand the targets’ underlying emotions. They reported that respondents saw the process of bullying primarily as a metaphorical game or battle, water torture, and a noxious substance. Bullies were narcissistic dictators or royalty, two-faced actors, and evil or demons. Finally, targets viewed themselves as slaves or animals, prisoners, children, and heartbroken lovers. Both studies reported common emotions of feeling trapped, powerless, and frightened. However, neither study reported the ways in which the connections between the metaphors and emotions were identified, so it is difficult to comprehend why some emotions

were chosen whilst others were excluded. Furthermore, it is unclear exactly which emotions the metaphor users intended. The absence of a defined process, or reports of such a process, limits the robustness of the interpretations, despite the laudable attempts to increase overall understanding of workplace bullying by both studies.

In summary, this literature review has provided a discussion of various aspects of bullying literature to conceptualise the phenomenon. The literature has indicated that bullying is an established problem; however, gaps in knowledge exist. The absence of both a comprehensive process model and a systematic approach for identifying emotions from metaphors provide opportunities to contribute to the literature. In the final section, I discuss the hypotheses and research questions that underpin this thesis.

## **2.10. Research questions and hypotheses**

The existing body of research indicates that workplace bullying is a serious issue for individuals and organisations. The goals of this study are to establish the extent of bullying in one segment of the New Zealand workplace and to identify the ways targets of bullying experience it. In addressing these goals, I will attempt to resolve several gaps in the literature.

The first gap relates to the limited amount of research carried out in New Zealand, when this study started, and the absence of a reference point for determining the extent to which workers experience bullying. To remedy this shortcoming, I devised research question 1, as follows:

*Research question 1: To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics?*

To establish the extent to which bullying exists in ITPs, this study uses an instrument that allows comparison with other studies. The Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) is a popular tool for measuring bullying at work that has been used in a variety of international settings, including several European countries (e.g., Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Giorgi, 2009; Lewis & Gunn, 2007; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001), Turkey (Cemaloglu, 2007), and the USA (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Negative acts are an important indicator of bullying

occurring in organisations (Agervold, 2007). This study focuses on negative acts that occurred in Denmark, Norway, and Turkey.

Countries have a range of social, political, and organisational variations that may influence levels of bullying. Two factors that may affect country differences are the degree of unionisation and the prominence of public messages that raise awareness of and resistance to bullying (Thirlwall & Haar, 2010a, 2010b). Each of these countries varies in its level of union membership amongst employees. In 1970, Denmark, Norway, and New Zealand had similar levels of unionisation, at 60%, 57%, and 55% respectively (Blanchflower, 2007; Visser, 2003). However, between 1970 and 2003, Denmark's level of unionisation rose by 10.1% whilst Norway's level dropped slightly by 3.5%. Meanwhile, New Zealand had a major reduction during this period (Blanchflower, 2007; Visser, 2003) and the current rate of unionization in New Zealand is around 30% (Statistics New Zealand, 2005). Data for Turkey is limited, but what is available estimates union density to be around 10–15 per cent of the labour force (Celik & Lordoglu, 2006 as cited in Yildirim & Suayyip, 2008) and there was a fall in union membership between 2000 and 2007 (Hall-Jones, 2007)<sup>1</sup>. Given these changes in representation, it seems likely that New Zealand employees will have less protection at work than Danish and Norwegian employees.

The raising of public awareness, in relation to workplace bullying, also presents an international difference. European countries appear to provide greater exposure to information about the unacceptability of workplace bullying compared to New Zealand. Many countries have support organisations that provide advice and telephone help-lines (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, n.d.). In addition, the UK holds a “Ban Bullying at Work” day in November each year (National Bullying Helpline, 2010) that receives support from a public sector union (UNISON). This event raises the profile of the phenomenon and, by drawing attention to the experiences of targets and the behaviour of perpetrators, may help to reduce the frequency of bullying.

Given New Zealand has substantially lowered levels of workplace unionisation, despite union representation being available for ITP workers, and no formal government awareness programme towards bullying, it seems likely that

---

<sup>1</sup> Turkey is treated as being in Europe in this study, but geographically it is also in Asia.

incidents of bullying in New Zealand ITPs may be higher when compared to the reports from European countries. These factors lead to hypothesis 1.

*Hypothesis 1: New Zealand employees will report higher frequency rates of negative acts compared to respondents in European countries.*

To explore the extent of bullying in the New Zealand ITP sector more fully, I also consider differences amongst certain demographic groups in terms of their experiences of negative acts and self-identified bullying. Given the prominence of power imbalances in bullying, four different groups of potentially low-power employees were analysed further. These employee groups were (1) *women*, (2) *part-time workers*, (3) *temporary workers*, and (4) *Maori*. Scholars initially viewed bullying as non-gender or race specific, as everyone is a potential target (e.g., Adams & Crawford, 1992; Field, 1996). However, more recently, research into the experiences of specific groups has emerged (see Lewis & Gunn (2007) for racial minorities, and Lewis (2006), Miller (1997), Shallcross (2003), and Shallcross, Ramsey, & Barker (2008) for women). Following a study of fire service workers, Archer (1999) noted that, "Anyone can be a victim of bullying--but if you are in a minority by either gender or race--the likelihood is dramatically increased" (p. 99). The relatively low levels of power that women and ethnic minorities have in most workplaces might possibly explain Archer's conclusion (Salin, 2003b). If low power is indeed the factor that makes these workers more likely to be targets, it is worth asking which other demographic groups may suffer greater levels of bullying. Thus, in addition to gender and race, the present enquiry includes part-time and temporary workers in the investigation of the extent of bullying in the New Zealand ITP sector. The associated hypotheses are discussed as follows.

*Women versus men.* Traditionally, men have had, and continue to have, greater power in the workplace (Bradley, 1999). Statistics New Zealand (2005) stated that female average total hourly earnings still lagged behind men in 2005, with women on average earning 86.3% of men's salaries. Furthermore, while women's participation in the workforce has been increasing for decades, 74.8% of men are in employment versus only 60.2% of women, indicating the women are

still the minority. Being in a minority may undermine women's power and may correspond with more frequently being targets of bullying. There is a plethora of support for gender differences in bullying (Archer, 1999; Lewis, 2006; Miller, 1997; Shallcross 2003; Shallcross et al. 2008) and as such, I hypothesise the following:

*Hypothesis 2: Women will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared men.*

*Full-time versus part-time workers.* Organisations often employ part-time workers on the margins of their operations, typically with less access to organisational resources; consequently, they have less power than full-time workers (Bradley, 1999). Furthermore, given that the 460,000 part-time workers represent a much smaller proportion of the New Zealand workforce compared to 1.06 million full-time workers (Statistics New Zealand, 2005), these workers may feel that they have little power. Statistics New Zealand (2005) reported that 81.5% of part-time workers wanted to work more hours and 18.4% wanted to work full-time instead, which reinforces this view. Consequently, as part-time workers are likely to want more work they may be in a position of need and thus low power; therefore, they are more likely to be targets of bullying than full-time workers. As such, I hypothesise the following:

*Hypothesis 3: Part-time workers will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared to full-time workers.*

*Temporary contract versus permanent contract workers.* Similarly, temporary workers also have less power in their workplace than permanent workers (Bradley, 1999; Rogers, 2000) and often feel alienated from their work (Clark, Halbesleben, Lester, & Heintz, 2010) thus they may be more susceptible to bullying. Statistics New Zealand (2005) reported that 19.1% of people who left their last job did so because it was temporary or seasonal in nature and, similar to part-time workers, temporary workers may have less access to resources than permanent staff. Perpetrators may also see temporary workers as less important

than permanent workers and thus expendable; consequently, they may be more likely to be targets of bullying. As such, I hypothesise the following:

*Hypothesis 4: Temporary contract workers will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared to permanent contract workers.*

*Maori workers versus non-Maori workers.* Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand and are under-represented in the New Zealand workplace. While making up 14.6% of the New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand, 2007), Maori fare less well in the workplace. In 2005, Europeans/Pakeha<sup>2</sup> had a 3.6% growth in employment, while Maori had a 2.3% drop in employment (Statistics New Zealand, 2005). Furthermore, Maori had an unemployment rate of 8.7% compared to 2.7% for Europeans/Pakeha (Statistics New Zealand, 2005). Finally, by average weekly income, average Maori salaries are 73.9% compared to the average New Zealand European/Pakeha wage. Consequently, Maori appear to hold an inferior position in the New Zealand workplace. Therefore, I suggest Maori are in a position of low power and more susceptible to bullying (Huq, 2004; Konrad, Prasad, & Pringle, 2006), this leads to the last hypothesis relating to power relationships:

*Hypothesis 5: Maori workers will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared to non-Maori workers.*

Overall, I suggest these four groups of employees (women, part-time workers, temporary contract workers, and Maori workers) will be more susceptible to negative acts and self-identified bullying than men, full-time workers, permanent contract workers, and non-Maori workers because they lack power in the workplace.

In addition to establishing the extent of bullying in New Zealand ITPs, a goal of the study is to identify the ways targets experience bullying. Survey instruments, like the Negative Acts Questionnaire, provide predetermined definitions of bullying. These definitions are less helpful for exploring targets'

---

<sup>2</sup> New Zealand born person, usually of European heritage

personal constructions of the phenomenon. Inductive investigations of the perceptions of bullying in the workplace are fewer but these tend to provide in-depth analyses from targets' perspectives. For example, and as previously noted, Archer (1999) focused on bullying in the fire service, whilst Pietersen (2007) concentrated on academic and management staff to gain an insight into their experiences of bullying. Other inductive studies have focused on horizontal bullying by colleagues (Leymann, 1990) and the mobbing of public sector employees (Shallcross, 2003). All of these studies have provided valuable insights into targets' experiences of bullying.

A further perspective emerged with the development of process models. Leymann (1990) and Lutgen-Sandvik (2003) developed two separate process models to illustrate of the bullying process. These models show a set of phases, or steps, that lead to the expulsion of target from the organisation. However, as argued earlier in this chapter, these models have limitations and these limitations led to the development of research question 2:

*Research question 2: How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?*

Part of the overall construction of bullying incorporates the ways in which targets view their jobs. The literature suggests that employees who suffer bullying at work are more likely to report lower job satisfaction. This is because the psychological distress caused by bullying behaviours is likely to result in them dreading their job and consequently feeling less satisfied. For example, in their study of Norwegian assistant nurses, Einarsen et al. (1998) found that the respondents who had been subject to bullying had lowered job satisfaction compared with their non-bullied colleagues. More recently, Bilgel, Aytac, and Bayram (2006) reported that Turkish white-collar workers had lower levels of job satisfaction, whilst at the same time reporting higher levels of anxiety and depression. A nationwide, longitudinal study in Norway also found that exposure to bullying decreased job satisfaction over time (Nielsen, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2008). Job satisfaction plays an important part in work performance and Riketta (2008) noted that positive attitudes, like job satisfaction, lead to better job outcomes.

A further form of job outcome is job performance. The few studies that have explored the links between bullying and job performance have found links between employees reporting higher bullying and lower productivity (e.g., Baruch, 2005; Leymann, 1990). Customers have also reported links between bullying and performance (Mathisen et al., 2008). Baruch (2005) noted that abusive emails were likely to affect job performance, whilst Leymann (1990) reported that mobbing led to deteriorating work by targets that consequently had a negative effect on job performance. As with job satisfaction, an employee who is frightened of victimisation and belittlement at work is likely to respond with reduced attention towards, or concentration on, his or her job, hence lowering job performance. Hypotheses 6 and 7 draw on the established literature and the expected influence of bullying on job outcomes, as follows:

*Hypothesis 6: Higher rates of negative acts will be associated with lower job satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 7: Higher rates of negative acts will be associated with lower job performance.*

Finally, as discussed in section 2.9, exploring targets' metaphorical descriptions of bullying provides an opportunity to identify their personal emotions and feelings about their experiences. Such descriptions are important because they help to illuminate a phenomenon that is hard to understand unless it has been experienced (Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2007; Gilbert & Malone, 1995). In two previous studies, metaphors of bullying and their associations with emotions were analysed. As noted, scholars in Australia reported limited success, as participants found it difficult to produce metaphors on demand (Sheehan et al., 2004). In a later study in the USA, scholars analysed naturally occurring metaphors, which resulted in more details being produced (Tracy et al., 2006). Although these studies provided a useful initial benchmark of how bullying feels for targets, neither study reported using a defined process for linking metaphors and emotions, and as a result, it is difficult to understand how scholars reached their conclusions. Having two studies with opaque processes and differing collection methods limits the opportunities for comparison, and suggests that further exploration of metaphors and emotions may be fruitful. Therefore, in order

to find out how New Zealand ITP workers use metaphors and whether they experience similar emotions to participants in earlier studies, I devised research question 3, as follows:

*Research question 3: How do targets use metaphors to construct the emotional experience of bullying?*

## **2.11. Conclusion**

In summary, this review indicates that workplace bullying is an important issue that warrants further investigation to enrich the knowledge already gathered from other parts of the western world. Although New Zealand has undergone many of the organisational changes that act as antecedents to the bullying process, limited enquiry has occurred to ascertain their impact. In order to fill the gap in New Zealand based research, improve existing process models, and increase knowledge of metaphors and emotions, I developed three research questions and seven hypotheses. The next chapter discusses the methods used to answer these questions.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

This chapter explains the design, rationale, and assumptions underlying the study. Specifically, this chapter provides the following: (1) an introduction to the logic behind the analysis, (2) details of the study design, (3) a description of the samples and participants, (4) an explanation of the data collection process, including measures used, and finally, (5) a description of the analysis undertaken. Providing a clearer understanding of bullying involved the use of quantitative and qualitative research to answer three research questions:

*Research question 1: To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics?*

*Research question 2: How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?*

*Research question 3: How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?*

Although the main objective of this study was to undertake in-depth interviews to gain rich descriptions of experiences of workplace bullying, a quantitative survey identified the extent to which bullying exists and informed the exploration of related issues. A brief overview of my philosophical approach to this research and an argument supporting the use of two different methodologies follows.

#### **3.1. Methodology and method**

In this study I adopted a post-positivist paradigm. Traditionally, positivism asserts that objective accounts of the real world can be created using experiment and observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Knowledge is the product of experience interpreted through rational deduction, and the use of appropriate techniques will result in the correct answers (Ryan, 2006). Whilst this approach is useful, particularly in natural sciences, Ryan argues that positivism has the disadvantage of fragmenting human experience rather than treating it as a whole. Furthermore

she notes that knowledge is not neutral, and the clear divisions between objectivity and subjectivity required by positivism are artificial, socially constructed perspectives. Consequently, knowledge is not dualistic but complex and it requires researchers to incorporate a multiplicity of views, and be mindful of the influence of their own epistemology. Post-positivism provides an opportunity to overcome the disadvantages of positivism by accepting that only partially objective accounts of the world can be produced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and researchers socially construct knowledge in conjunction with participants (Ryan, 2006).

The post-positivist paradigm reflects my own views about research, in that it emphasises meaning and the creation of new knowledge and makes no claims for pure or absolute objectivity. Furthermore, it incorporates my values and biases, which will in turn influence the outcome of the areas being studied because information is not merely presented as it is constructed from the research questions but it is interpreted to illuminate the research area (Cheney, 2000). The researcher's role in shaping what is being studied is acknowledged through the use of reflexivity (Altheide & Johnson 1994) and this approach goes some way to account for the influence the researcher has on the people and situations under consideration.

A major claim of post-positivism is that it is broad rather than specialised (Ryan, 2006) Therefore, in order to capture as much of reality as possible, post-positivism relies on multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As discussed in the literature review, very little research into workplace bullying had taken place in New Zealand when this study started, so although my main interest was in gaining rich descriptions of experiences of workplace bullying through the use of in-depth interviews, the use of a survey tool seemed appropriate for identifying the extent to which the phenomenon exists, and also for creating a foundation for this study and future studies. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches can be useful as these provide an opportunity for different perspectives on the same phenomenon (Zorn, Roper, Broadfoot, & Weaver, 2006) and this adds rigor, depth, richness and complexity to studies (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Using multiple modes of research allows the findings to be elaborated and social reality to be better understood (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) and using different approaches

sequentially may allow initial findings to inform the development of the next stage of the research (Cheney, 2000).

In this study, a questionnaire about workplace bullying with an empirical focus is the precursor to a set of in-depth qualitative interviews about workplace bullying. The goal of answering the different questions influenced my choice to use such an approach and this is supported by Cowie et al. (2002), who note that the adoption of multiple methods may deepen understanding of bullying and, as there are many aspects to bullying that are not easily answered by single methods, multiple methods are appropriate. Specifically, I used a quantitative method to collect data to answer research question 1. I then used qualitative methods to collect data to answer research questions 2 and 3. The rationale behind this approach was to provide a broad overview of the problem and then progress to more in-depth analysis; however, where possible both data sets are synthesised to answer the research questions. Therefore, the study is comprised of two distinct parts, quantitative and qualitative, and the resultant data contributes to answering the research questions as appropriate. These approaches fit within the post-positivist paradigm and they are discussed in more detail below.

## **3.2. Study design – Part 1: Quantitative**

This section provides an overview of the method used primarily to address research question 1: To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics? To answer this question, I developed an online questionnaire, using a modified version of the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) (Einarsen & Hoel, n.d.). I selected this measure because it is a popular approach for testing workplace bullying. The NAQ has been used in over 60 studies, containing more than 40,000 respondents from about 40 countries (Bergen Bullying Research Group, n.d.) making it useful for comparisons. Section 3.2.5 contains a detailed discussion of the NAQ.

### **3.2.1. Sector**

The research context for this study is the tertiary education sector. Specifically, the study focuses on the experiences of workers in Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs). I chose this sector because I had worked in both academic and management positions in two ITPs for several years. Consequently, I was

aware of some of the issues that existed in the sector, and I was reasonably confident that I would be able to gain permission to speak with employees and gather data. Furthermore, workers in the education sector may be more likely to experience high levels of bullying (Leymann, 1996; Zapf, Knorz, & Kulla, 1996); therefore, finding interesting examples of the phenomenon was more likely.

The tertiary sector also includes universities, private training establishments (PTEs), and wananga (Maori education providers). Each type of education provider has its own regulations, traditions, and target student groups. Universities fulfil the traditional role of providing undergraduate and post-graduate academic qualifications, whilst PTEs tend to specialise in vocational studies. Wananga and ITPs vary their offerings from vocational to academic post-graduate qualifications. However, there is sometimes an overlap in the offerings of the different types of tertiary education providers. Variations also exist within the ITP sector, for example, some organisations offer undergraduate and master's degrees whilst others do not have degree programmes. Institutions in the sector vary in size from fewer than 50 to several hundred staff. Regardless of these differences, ITPs are a discrete group owing to their legal standing, similarity of structure, regulations, and objectives.

There are 20 ITPs located throughout New Zealand. I sought support for the study from the CEOs of all 20 by letter in late 2006. Twelve ITPs provided some support for the study. Eight agreed to distribute a link to a website and provide access to Human Resource (HR) workers. Of the remaining four, two sent out the link but did not allow me access to HR workers, whilst the remaining two provided access to HR workers but declined to send out the link. Of the eight ITPs not participating in the study, two declined because they were participating in other research, one declined owing to restructuring, two declined but did not give reasons, and three did not reply.

I sent an email to participating ITPs' HR managers that included an electronic message designed for uploading to their ITP's website or for forwarding to staff by email (shown in section 3.2.2.). Mid-way through the period of the questionnaire's availability (1 February to 28 March 2007) I sent a further message to the participating organisations asking them to remind their staff of the study and its deadline. However, I was unable to confirm whether this happened. A disadvantage of distributing the survey in this way was the lack of

control it afforded, and relying on third parties may have contributed, at least in part, to the low response rate.

### **3.2.2. Sample and participants**

The focus of this study is workers in ITPs, both academic and general staff. Staff of ten organisations received invitations to participate in the study. This provided a potential population of 1500 employees<sup>3</sup>. The participants were self-selecting and the responses were anonymous.

In order to encourage participation in the study, I developed a website. The website invited people from New Zealand ITPs to complete the online survey questionnaire and provided an electronic link to it. The website also displayed a request for volunteers for in-depth interviews and contact details for people who had questions about the study. I supplied participating ITPs with the following message to use on their internal websites and in emails:

*A study of adult bullying in the workplace is being carried out in 2007 by University of Waikato PhD student Alison Thirlwall.*

*Alison is keen to hear from people who work, or have worked, in tertiary education and have any experience of adult bullying or hold views on the subject. All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.*

*More information about the study, access to an online questionnaire, and contact details are available at:*

*<http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/adultbullyingnz/Study.htm>.*

*The questionnaire will be available to Wednesday 28 March 2007.*

*\_\_\_\_\_ Institute of Technology/Polytechnic supports this study and we encourage everyone to complete the questionnaire before the deadline.*

In order to achieve a broad sample and limit any skewing of the responses, a note on the home page of the website encouraged a wide audience to complete the survey. This note said: “Whether or not you feel that you have experienced bullying at work, as an observer, participant or target of bullies, please take the

---

<sup>3</sup> This figure is an estimate from information provided by participating ITPs

time to share your experiences and views by completing the online questionnaire". The requirement to include the term *bullying* in the web address and the survey email came from the Waikato Management School's Ethics Committee. The requirement to use the term bullying in the invitation presented a challenge, as it may have led to a skewing of the population. However, as this study aimed to gather the views of people who had a range of experiences of workplace bullying (as a witness, target, perpetrator, manager, family member etc.), rather than the views of a random sample of the population who might be unacquainted with the term, this is inevitable. Scholars in this area have argued that such an approach is appropriate owing to the special nature of workplace bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2008). As discussed in the literature review, invisibility and correspondence bias may result in only those who have experienced bullying in some way recognising it. Consequently, those who have no experience of bullying are unlikely to see any relevance of the study to themselves (Branch et al., 2006). Therefore, participants were more likely to complete the questionnaire if they recognised the concept of workplace bullying than if they did not. Conversely, the invitation may have deterred people who were reluctant to name their experiences (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Miller, 1997), so there is a possibility of under reporting (Namie & Namie, 2000). The use of an open approach is similar to a study by Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001), where participants were advised of the nature of the research. Conversely, Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2007) took steps to avoid a skewed sample by not referring to bullying. Other studies did not report taking any specific action to avoid skewing of the results (Cemaloglu, 2007; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). The approach to skewing is an important difference between the current and comparison studies.

In total, the survey received 151 eligible responses, which gave a 10% response rate. Around two thirds of the 151 respondents were women ( $n = 104$ ) whilst the remainder were men ( $n = 47$ ). The distribution of ages was as follows: 8.7% of respondents were aged 21-30 years ( $n = 13$ ), 29.5% of respondents were aged 31-40 years ( $n = 44$ ), 33.6% of respondents were aged 41-50 years ( $n = 50$ ), 24.8% of respondents were aged 51-60 years ( $n = 37$ ), and 3.4% ( $n = 5$ ) were aged over 60 years. Two respondents did not give their age group. The majority of respondents were NZ European/Pakeha (73.3%,  $n = 110$ ). The next largest group

was Maori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) with 11.3% ( $n = 17$ ), while Europeans ( $n = 10$ ) made up the third largest group with 6.7%. The rest were a mixture of Australians, Asians, North Americans, and others. The majority of respondents were in a relationship, either married (49.7%,  $n = 74$ ) or de facto/co-habiting (20.1%,  $n = 30$ ). Single respondents made up 20.8% ( $n = 31$ ), while the rest were either separated (3.4%,  $n = 5$ ) or divorced (6.0%,  $n = 9$ ). Two respondents did not provide an answer regarding their relationship status. The respondents were employees from all areas of work related to higher education in the ITP sector. Just over half of the respondents (53.6%,  $n = 81$ ) said they worked as academics, with the next largest group being administration (15.9%,  $n = 24$ ) followed by management (12.6%,  $n = 19$ ). The remainder were librarians, technicians, maintenance, support services, and others, such as medical centre staff. Over ninety percent of respondents were in permanent employment (92%,  $n = 138$ ), and 84% ( $n = 126$ ) were employed in full-time positions.

### **3.2.3. Online questionnaire**

Administration of the survey questionnaire took place online. The speed, efficiency, and relative ease of analysis this method offered, influenced the decision to gather data with an online questionnaire (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1991; O'Leary 2005). Creating an online version of the NAQ survey was also a practical solution to reaching a geographically spread group of people. I used an established tool, Survey Monkey, because it was easy to administer and contained appropriate features.

Computers are widely used for communication in ITPs and over 60% of the New Zealand population had internet access at home around the time of the survey (Statistics New Zealand Census, 2006, n.d.) meaning that potential respondents would be likely to gain access to the survey at home if they were unwilling or unable to do so at work. An important feature of an online survey is the anonymity it offers participants. Frey et al. (1991) argued that by offering anonymity and the promise of confidentiality, the accuracy of self-reporting is likely to increase because respondents could relate their experiences without fear of having to account for their answers. The benefits of this method indicate that it is likely to be suitable for a study of a sensitive topic like workplace bullying.

Indeed, Lutgen-Sandvik et al. carried out a similar online survey using the NAQ in the USA in 2007.

### **3.2.4. Pilot testing**

Before using the questionnaire, I undertook a two-phase pilot test. In the first phase, I emailed the questionnaire to four volunteer testers. They worked through the questions online, and returned their comments to me. Overall, they found the questionnaire easy to use, and made recommendations for minor amendments to the layout. For example, one person suggested splitting a long page of questions to make the online version easier to navigate, and to prevent confusion when the scrolling-down the page. In the second phase, 10 different volunteers provided feedback. This phase was particularly useful for ensuring that the technology was operating correctly. Participant responses from the pilot test were not included in the study.

### **3.2.5. Measures**

The NAQ is a research inventory for measuring frequency, intensity, and prevalence of workplace bullying, and perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work (Bergen Bullying Research Group, n.d.). Respondents answer 29 negative acts items in the main body of the questionnaire without having to label themselves as bullied, which provides an objective measure of bullying. Once this is complete, respondents indicate whether they consider themselves targets according to a definition of bullying at work. The title of this measure is *self-identified bullying* (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007).

The original Norwegian version of the NAQ was adapted for use in English speaking countries, and tested in a representative survey of 4,996 employees, recruited from 70 UK organisations, and representing 1 million employees (Einarsen & Hoel, n.d.). The response rate was 43%, and a Cronbach's alpha of .92 showed high internal reliability. The authors concluded that the English language version of NAQ is a valid and reliable measure of exposure to workplace bullying.

Research into the NAQ reports that when all items combine the scales have satisfactory reliability and construct validity. Studies have shown that internal reliability of the scale is high, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .87 to

.93 when combining the NAQ with a single measure of bullying (Bergen Bullying Research Group, n.d.). Studies also show that the scale correlates with measures of job-satisfaction in the range of  $r = -.24$  to  $r = -.44$ , with measures of psychological health and well-being in the range of  $r = -.31$  to  $-.52$ , and with measures of psychosomatic complaints ( $r = .32$ ) (Bergen Bullying Research Group, n.d.).

The NAQ formed the basis of the New Zealand Negative Acts Questionnaire. The next section discusses the development of the questionnaire to answer research question 1.

### **3.2.6. Development of a New Zealand Negative Acts Questionnaire**

The New Zealand Negative Acts Questionnaire (NZNAQ) is an adaptation of the NAQ, with the language and demographic questions modified for this particular cultural setting. Additional questions about job outcomes were included to contribute to the answers to research questions 1 and 2.

Although the translated NAQ was tested on 4,996 UK workers, I was concerned that some questions would not read as fluently as they could for New Zealand respondents, so I made some minor alterations. Other scholars have altered the survey to fit their needs (e.g., Giorgi, 2009; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007; Salin, 2003a), which suggests that this approach is not unusual. An example of potential ambiguity was the use of the English idiom “Sent to Coventry”. Whilst New Zealand has strong English connections, this term is likely to lead to misunderstanding, so “Being ignored, and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.” replaced it. Furthermore, I modified the response scale from “Now and then” to “Occasionally” for clarity. I shared the wording changes with the NAQ developers who responded positively to the amendments.

#### **3.2.6.1. Bullying measures**

In addition to the individual NAQ items, the study used some comprehensive measures of bullying, including three subscales comprised of the NAQ items. Einarsen and Raknes (1997) tested the underlying factor structure through factor analysis to test for subscale dimensions of bullying. They found a number of subscales, including *personal derogation*, *work related harassment*, and *social exclusion*. The first two dimensions, personal derogation and work related

harassment, have been confirmed by replication (e.g., Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001). The present study used confirmatory factor analysis to test the factor structure of the three bullying dimensions.

The personal derogation subscale was calculated using the nine items identified by Einarsen and Raknes (1997). This subscale includes behaviours that are not directly work related. Sample items are “Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), your attitudes or private life” and “Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger or rage”. Factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) showed the items loaded onto a single factor with eigenvalues greater than 1 (4.832), accounting for 53.7% of the variance. This measure had a Cronbach’s alpha of .89.

The work-related harassment subscale was calculated using the three items identified by Einarsen and Raknes (1997). This dimension included behaviours directly linked to work and work responsibilities. Sample items are “Being ordered to do work below your level of competence” and “Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks”. Factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) showed the items loaded onto a single factor with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.904), accounting for 63.5% of the variance. This measure had a Cronbach’s alpha of .70.

The social exclusion subscale was calculated using three items identified by Einarsen and Raknes (1997). As suggested by the title, this dimension measured behaviours that were likely to prevent targets being involved in workplace groups. Sample items are “Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.” and “Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job”. Factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) showed the items loaded onto a single factor with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.715), accounting for 57.2% of the variance. This measure had an inferior Cronbach’s alpha of .62 and whilst this is below the usual Cronbach’s alpha desired threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), it was fundamentally more robust than the Cronbach’s alpha of .33 found by Einarsen and Raknes (1997). Furthermore, Pallant (2007) noted that Cronbach’s Alpha is dependent on the number of items, and measures with smaller items (less than ten) likely to have lower scores. In this case, Pallant (2007) recommends examining the inter-item correlation with optimal values ranging from .2 to .4. The three items for the Social Exclusion

Subscale had inter-item correlation values of .3 to .5, meeting this suggested minimum. Consequently, given the sufficient inter-item correlation amongst the three items, despite the marginal nature of the measure reliability, the subscale was retained for analysis.

Finally, self reported bullying was calculated from the responses to a definition of bullying. Respondents were asked to state whether they had been bullied at work in the last six months by selecting *no* or one of a range of yes options (e.g., *yes, but rarely*) in response to a definition (as shown in appendix C).

#### 3.2.6.2. Other variables

A number of dichotomous variables, including demographic (e.g., gender) and employment status (e.g., part/full-time) were also collected and used specifically for testing the relationship of bullying and power relationships (Hypotheses 4-7).

Five items on a seven-point scale measured *job satisfaction*. The items ranged from *very dissatisfied* to *very satisfied* (van Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek, & Frings-Dresen, 2003). Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction towards the following items: “Quality of supervision”, “Communication at your place of work”, “Co-workers”, “Meaningfulness of tasks”, and “Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?” This measure was tested by factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation), which showed the items loaded onto a single factor with an eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.049), accounting for 68.3% of the variance. This measure had a Cronbach’s alpha of .73.

Four items measured *job performance*. Seven possible responses ranged from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*; these were a composite of measures derived from the literature (e.g., Schleicher, Watt, & Greguras, 2004; Goris, Vaught & Pettit, 2000; Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998). The measure included aspects relating to quality of performance (Goris et al., 2000), how well one does things related to the job (Welbourne et al., 1998), and overall performance (Schleicher et al., 2004). The four items were “I work hard at my job”, “My job performance is the best it has ever been”, “The quality of my work is excellent” and “I am motivated to achieve excellence in my current job”. This measure was tested by factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation), which showed the items loaded onto a single factor with an eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.108), accounting for 52.7% of the variance. This measure had a

Cronbach's alpha of .70. A fifth item, ("I could work much harder at my job that I actually do" [reverse coded]), was dropped because it separated into a single distinct factor in the factor analysis; thus, only four items were used.

### 3.2.7. Similarities and differences between international studies

Findings in this study are compared to other international studies that used the Negative Acts Questionnaire. Few studies provide complete details of reported frequencies and an issue with the literature is the variability of the total number of items tested, as studies used different versions of the NAQ (18, 22, 23 and 29 item versions). Therefore this study focuses the questions that appeared in all of the studies where frequencies were reported. Furthermore, the studies contained a number of variations; therefore, it is important to consider the similarities and differences between the samples and approaches. A summary of the features of each study is presented in table 4.

Table 4

*International Study Comparison*

Author	Setting	Country	Method	Sample size	No. of NAQ Items
Einarsen and Raknes (1997)	Marine Engineering	Norway	Paper survey	460	22
Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001)	Post graduate students, hospitals, manufacturing company, and department store	Denmark	Paper survey	90	23
Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002)	Manufacturing	Denmark	Paper survey	224	18
Cemaloglu (2007)	Elementary Schools	Turkey	Paper survey	337	18
Current study	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics	New Zealand	Online	151	29

In addition to using varying sets of NAQ items, there are several other differences in the studies. First, sample sizes varied. The current study is relatively small, with only one study (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001) being smaller. Second, approaches to data collection also varied. In the current study, data was collected online, whilst the other four studies used a traditional, paper-based approach. Third, the degree of choice in participation varied. Respondents in one study (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997) were required to complete the survey, whilst respondents in the other studies were volunteers. Fourth, attempts to avoid skewing were not reported the comparison studies, whilst the current study attempted to avoid skewing by asking for a broad range of respondents, but the respondents were aware of subject area. Fifth, demographics varied amongst the studies. All five studies reported a wide range of ages. Women were over-represented in the current sample and in Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001) but not in the remaining studies, where men outnumbered women. Overall the ages in the current sample are similar to the comparison studies but there are variations in sex distribution. The current sample was weighted towards white-collar higher education workers. Two of the comparison studies had similar types of respondents as the current study: high school teachers (Cemaloglu, 2007), and post-graduate students, health professionals and retail workers (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001), who are likely to be broadly comparable to the sample in the current study. However, Einarsen and Raknes (1997) surveyed marine engineering workers and Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) also included a sample from a manufacturing company, both of which are dissimilar to the current study.

In addition to using different samples and varying versions of the NAQ, the reporting of frequencies also varied. The NAQ uses a 5-point response scale to indicate frequency of negative acts (i.e., *never*, *occasionally*, *monthly*, *weekly*, *daily* or other broadly synonymous terms). Typically, results used aggregated frequencies, for example reporting the combined frequencies for weekly and daily (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001, 2002). Overall, sample sizes, data collection methods, populations, and reporting of data vary in the studies. However, these studies have been used because they report frequency data, which allows some opportunity for comparison.

### **3.2.8. Analysis**

Seven hypotheses were analysed. To answer hypothesis 1, I compared the NAQ response frequencies with the frequency outputs of the international studies. Differences relating to power and the frequency of bullying (hypotheses 2 to 5) were analysed using *t*-tests. Finally, correlation analysis and (where applicable) regression analysis were conducted to test the links between the *various bullying* measures (three sub-scales) and dimensions of *job satisfaction* (hypothesis 6) and *job performance* (hypothesis 7).

Analysis for hypotheses 2 to 5 involved comparing the 29 items of the NAQ, three NAQ subscales and self-identified bullying. While this does create a large number of components to compare and test, the small numbers of bullying studies that have reported the NAQ items report similar analyses (e.g., Cemaloglu, 2007; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001, 2002). Detailed analyses improve the opportunity for making comparisons; consequently, I follow this approach by providing results of all NAQ items used, and the four bullying subscale constructs. Chapter 4 presents results of this analysis, whilst the next section discusses the interviews.

## **3.3. Study Design – Part 2: Qualitative**

This section provides an overview of the plan for addressing research questions 2 (“How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?”) and 3 (“How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?”) To answer these questions, volunteers, and HR workers provided data in semi-structured interviews. This section presents the rationale for using interviews. It then discusses the design and conduct of the interviews, and finally, it explains how the resulting materials were analysed.

### **3.3.1. Rationale for using interviews**

Interviews provided the means for collecting detailed information about participants’ experiences of workplace bullying. The use of face-to-face interviews offered the opportunity to build rapport and clarify comments (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Being able to observe participants’ non-verbal responses was particularly important, because I wanted to be sensitive to the well-being of those who had experienced bullying, for example, if they became distressed when

recounting experiences (Frey et al., 1991; O’Leary, 2005). The use of open questions, asking participants to describe their experiences, give their views of the causes of workplace bullying, and explain the outcomes, enabled interviewees to present their stories in their own words. This approach offered a "richer account" of interviewees’ experiences (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 71.) Collecting and analysing participants’ accounts of bullying in this way was useful for identifying the meaning that they attached to their experiences (Elliott, 2005). HR worker interviews were included to provide some background context for interpreting bullying experiences in ITPs, in terms of available support processes and systems.

### **3.3.2. Design**

Interviews can have a variety of formats, from strictly structured to completely unstructured, and each approach has its merits and limitations (Fontana & Frey, 1994). I chose to use a semi-structured approach for both the bullying experience volunteers and HR workers because it allowed relevant, emergent themes to be further explored and gave breadth to the interviews, whilst keeping a focus on the subject area. Using a semi-structured format meant that questions could be modified and delivered in a manner that suited the interviewee and thus offered a degree of flexibility. To avoid missing important points, I created a list of topics to address in the interviews. The list included an opening question, “Tell me a bit about yourself and your job”, the main question, “Tell me about the bullying situation you experienced”, and follow-up questions that acted as prompts to encourage elaboration of the information provided (see appendix B for the complete list). Two targets requested the questions, so I gave them a copy of the list after the interview had finished. I was reluctant to provide questions in advance because I wanted respondents to speak naturally, and use their own words to describe their experiences rather than preparing tailored responses to fit the questions on my prompt sheet.

Whilst interviewing I listened actively to what was being said; I paraphrased and made supportive comments to reassure the interviewees, some of whom became distressed by the recounting of their experiences. As recommended by Oakley (1988), I answered questions, and gave advice about where to find support, such as counsellors, medical practitioners, self-help books, and Employee Assistance Programmes.

### 3.3.3. Interviewee selection

Interviewees were volunteers who had experience of workplace bullying and HR managers from organisations supporting the study. The volunteers expressed their willingness to participate in the study by sending emails to a link on the website, as referred to in section 3.2.2. Participants were not intended to represent the entire population of ITPs but instead provide a purposive group that had specific experiences of workplace bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2008; O’Leary, 2005; Patton 1990). The selection criteria included working, or having worked at an ITP, wanting to contribute experiences or views of bullying at work, and being available in a limited timeframe. Not everyone who contacted me to express an interest in participating in the study became an interviewee. For example, two people contacted me but then felt that they could not bear to revisit past unhappiness but one subsequently changed her mind at the last minute, following a further incident, and gave an interview. A third withdrew after she discovered her manager was a volunteer interviewee; she explained that she was too frightened to participate in case the manager recognised her comments in the final report. Two others withdrew for health reasons. Several volunteers came from outside the relevant sector, so I declined their offers to participate. In total, I interviewed 27 volunteers. I had expected volunteers to have a range of experiences, including ill-treatment, accusations of bullying others, and witness reports. However, as every volunteer spoke of having been the target of bullying, the remainder of this study calls them *targets* and *interviewees*.

CEOs selected HR managers to participate in the study. Ten HR manager interviews took place. In two of the smaller organisations, the HR managers were also CEOs. Three HR managers recommended that their Health and Safety Officers be interviewed too, making a total of 13 HR workers. The primary purpose of interviewing HR workers was to increase my understanding of the organisational and institutional context of bullying. I anticipated that HR managers would have a distinctly different perspective of workplace bullying compared to targets. However, in addition to describing their organisations’ policies and procedures for managing this phenomenon, or the absence thereof, four HR workers described their experiences of being a target of bullying at work.

I included the additional target responses from HR workers to the volunteer targets' responses, which resulted in 31 sets of bullying experiences.

The target interviewees showed similar characteristics to those of the questionnaire respondents, in that two thirds ( $n = 20$ ) were women, and one third were men ( $n = 11$ ), most were married, and most working as academics. The group mainly included people who were currently employed at ITPs ( $n = 26$ ), whilst the remainder were no longer employed in ITPs ( $n = 5$ ). The next section describes the collection of data using interviews.

### **3.3.4. Conducting the interviews**

I arranged all of the interviews, both for volunteers and HR managers, by email. The majority of interviews took place during May 2007 at a range of venues throughout New Zealand. Two final volunteer interviews, with former ITP staff now working in the Middle East, occurred in Dubai in June and July 2007. As recommended by Cheney (2000), I tried to interview in natural settings. Most people used their own work offices or other workplace facilities. To avoid drawing attention to their participation in the study, some targets chose to meet at the University of Waikato, where I was located at the time, whilst others invited me to their homes; finally, one interviewee came to my home in Dubai (I was living in both New Zealand and the UAE at the time). Prior to the interview, I provided all interviewees with an information sheet and consent form by email (see appendices D-G).

At the interview, I kept the style conversational and friendly to put interviewees at their ease. After an initial social chat, I gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and the way in which the interview would progress, to ensure that interviewees understood what would happen. I also explained the informed consent requirements of the university Ethics Committee. Most interviewees brought the signed consent form with them; the remainder completed the form prior to the commencement of the interviews. Finally, I gained permission to record the interview for subsequent transcription. Recording the interviews had the advantage of freeing me from note-taking to listen, respond, and observe the interviewees. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and three hours, with the average being approximately one and a half hours. The focus of the interview was either on the person's account of their experiences of

bullying, usually as a target, and occasionally as a witness too, or as an HR worker. As noted earlier, some HR workers also spoke of their own experiences as a target. Nobody identified his or herself as a perpetrator. At the end of the session, I offered interviewees a copy of the transcript of their interview so that they could review and amend it; only one person wanted the transcript, and returned it with minor alterations.

Although the interviews were intended to be one-to-one (i.e., one interviewee at a time) the spouses of two targets participated. The semi-structured style of the interviews allowed for incorporation of the additional responses, and the spouse's enhanced the targets' stories (O'Leary, 2005), by prompting and providing additional details.

### **3.3.5. Interview analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to answer research questions 2 ("How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?") and 3 ("How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?")

Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach used for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) in data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). By using sections of data incorporating multiple occurrences of the same thread of meaning, it was possible to develop themes that answered the research questions. There are different ways to use thematic analysis. This study uses it for inductive analysis (Patton, 1990), and consequently the themes were developed from the data, rather than the data being fitted into predetermined categories. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend a six-stage approach to thematic analysis and this guided my work. Briefly, the six stages are: (1) familiarisation with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

Following the six stages, I began by familiarising myself with the interview data. After listening to the recordings, I began to formulate some initial ideas and notes of possible codes. I transcribed the interviews using speech recognition software, and then corrected the transcripts whilst listening to each interview at least twice more. Transcribing the recordings was helpful for recalling full details of the interviews, but it was a difficult task, as the interviewees usually did not speak in formal sentences, which made it harder to

use the software. Although I tried to remain faithful to the message I was hearing, it is possible that something has been lost in the transcription process. As noted by Elliott (2005) any transcript of speech is a compromise as, “It is all but impossible to produce a transcription of a research interview, or any other type of conversation, which completely captures all of the meaning that was communicated in the encounter itself” (p. 51). Speaking the words of the interviewee had the advantage of providing a more intimate feel to the stories and helped with the punctuation. By transcribing in this fashion, I became very familiar with the stories.

Once the transcripts were complete, I loaded them to NVivo software and then moved to the next phase, generating initial codes. I worked through the transcripts line-by-line and selected sections that were potentially relevant to the research questions. I moved iteratively between the transcripts, adding additional codes as new ideas developed. Although the coding was inductive, or data-driven, in that it relied on the content of the interviews, existing literature had sensitised me to the elements of the process of workplace bullying (Bowen, 2006). Therefore, the work of other scholars in this area (e.g., Leymann, 1996; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003, 2006; Rayner, 1997; Tracy et al., 2006) influenced my code choices. After coding each transcript, I began to develop themes. I printed the codes on large sheets of paper and drew lines to link the individual codes into themes and subthemes; I did this a number of times before I was satisfied with the groupings. I then entered the themes and subthemes into NVivo. I reread the transcripts, as recommended by Braun and Clarke, (2006), and recoded to correct initial miscoding, adding further codes where appropriate. I wrote memos that noted the links and similarities between the examples of behaviours the interviewees mentioned (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). To gain an overall picture of what had emerged, I entered a summary of each of the respondents’ experiences into a table. The table showed how the experience related to the themes; a sample extract illustrates this exercise in table 5. I used a similar exercise to develop the subthemes. These tables were particularly useful for ensuring the relevance of each theme and the final themes emerged owing to the prevalence, or occasionally, the strength, of the reports.

Table 5  
*Sample Summary of Five Targets' Bullying Process Experiences*

Name	Precipitating Structure	Trigger	Direction	Abuse	Constraints	Resistance Type	Organisational Sequestering	Resolution
Felix <sup>4</sup> ,	New colleague	Standing up	Horizontal	Verbal aggression	Cash	Passive then active	Management/HR	Perpetrator leaves
Belinda	New supervisor	Standing out	Downward	Verbal aggression	Concern	Active	Management	Target leaves
Ava	New to position	Standing out	Upwards	Ostracism	None	Active	None	Perpetrators leave
Olga	New manager	Standing up	Downward	Verbal aggression	Cash	Active	Management/HR	Ongoing
Gerry	New manager	Standing out	Downward	Verbal and Non-verbal aggression	Cash	Active then paradoxical	Union/Management	Perpetrator leaves

*Note.* Read from left to right.

<sup>4</sup> Participant names and some story details have been changed throughout to protect confidentiality

### **3.3.6. Process model**

Following repeated reviews of the data, a pattern appeared to be emerging, so I designed a model to illustrate the relationships among the themes. The model shows how targets experienced workplace bullying as an iterative process that starts and ends with a change, or the threat of a change, in the composition of the work group. The process model design went through several iterations as I grouped and regrouped to avoid duplication and redundancy in the themes. I tested this model against five sets of interview results to ensure its robustness and then made minor alterations to the design to ensure logic and flow. I validated and refined the initial model design by reviewing it with two of the interviewees, whose transcripts were not part of the development, and three colleagues, to ensure that it captured the all themes. This process confirmed that saturation had taken place (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). I then conducted a final check against the remaining transcripts to confirm the model's robustness and ensure that it required no further changes. Section 5.9 presents the model and discusses it in more detail.

## **3.4. Metaphors**

In addition to the descriptive themes identified in response to research question 2, I also identified the metaphors that interviewees used in their descriptions of various aspects of bullying. The work of Sheehan et al. (2004) and Tracy et al. (2006) sensitised me to the possibility of using verbal metaphors as a mechanism for gathering descriptions of workplace bullying and identifying associated emotions (Bowen, 2006). Specifically, the earlier studies raised my awareness of the indirect ways that targets communicate how bullying felt and these studies offered a starting point for organising metaphors in the current study.

### **3.4.1. Metaphor collection**

The majority of metaphors occurred naturally when interviewees described their experiences of bullying. When metaphors had not been volunteered by the interviewees, (or when they had not been obvious to me during the interview), I asked interviewees for their metaphorical descriptions of their experiences. When I asked for metaphors, I gave a short explanation of what I meant, by saying "it was like..." or "it was as if..." Although this approach produces similes, it

seemed to be the most direct and clear way to explain, and in almost all cases, it was sufficient for the interviewees to gain an understanding of what I was asking them to do. Of the 31 interviewees who had experienced bullying, 22 provided metaphors without prompting. Two provided additional metaphors after I asked them to do so, one did not understand the concept, and the remaining six could not think of a response.

### **3.4.2. Metaphor analysis**

To analyse the data, I worked through the transcripts line-by-line using NVivo software and I highlighted sections of text that included metaphors. Using the work of Tracy et al. (2006), I looked for the metaphors that they identified, and noted others that the interviewees chose to use. I then grouped similar metaphors, according to their frequency, under three main headings: (1) experiences, (2) perpetrators, and (3) targets (Tracy et al., 2006). Some of the metaphors fitted into multiple groups, so these appear more than once.

In order to elicit the underlying emotional content of the metaphors, I used Steger's three-stage metaphor analysis (2007). The purpose of this process is to identify the tacit aspects of the interviewees' descriptions of their experiences. Briefly, the first stage in the process involves choosing a metaphor to analyse. Selection of the example may be due to its repetition, elaboration, relatedness, contrast, and/or emotion. The present study selected metaphors for analysis based on repetition and elaboration, that is, I selected metaphors because either they occurred multiple times or they enhanced the story. At the second stage of the process, Steger recommends selecting one of six tools for analysis: (1) comparisons, (2) associations, (3) dimensions, (4) categories, (5) concepts, and (6) idioms. These tools enable the researcher to identify the general meaning behind the metaphor. I primarily used associations, which involved using other scholars' interpretations of the emotions incorporated within metaphors; where these were unavailable, I used terms from Storm and Storm's (1987) taxonomy of emotions. Finally, the third stage of the process requires the researcher to consider: (1) the metaphor user's background, (2) the metaphor user's comprehension of the story, and (3) the ways in which metaphor users viewed their own actions. Steger notes that the process of understanding a metaphor relies on the creativity of the interpreter, so in this study I used the complete account provided by the

interviewees in order to identify as faithful an interpretation of their feelings as possible (Davidson, 1978; Steger, 2007). The following paragraphs discuss the use of a desert island metaphor to describe bullying and demonstrate the identification of emotions.

### **Bullying is a desert island**

*Stage 1.* Perry used the metaphor of a desert island to describe the way he moved from being an active member of his organisation's management team under one CEO, to becoming the target of upward bullying from subordinates, then downward bullying from a new CEO. I selected this metaphor because Perry used it repeatedly to elaborate his story. An example of its use is the comment: "My little desert island, I felt I was in, was getting pushed further and further away from the rest of the organisation". Perry repeatedly referred to his desert island and repetition of a metaphor emphasises its strength (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), making it worthy of additional consideration. Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) noted that people use metaphors that are culturally appropriate to themselves. In this case, an island is a culturally appropriate metaphor for a person from New Zealand—an island nation—to use. The inhabitants generally understand the dangers associated with the surrounding water and isolation, so islands are a fitting choice for conveying an unambiguous message in this country.

*Stage 2.* The next stage of Steger's process, General Metaphor Analysis, established possible meanings of the metaphor through its association with existing descriptions (Glucksberg & McGlone, 1999). A dictionary definition of an island defines it as "A piece of land surrounded by water", and a desert island is defined as "A small tropical island with no people living on it" (McMillan Dictionary Thesaurus, n.d.). These descriptions provide a helpful picture that may link to notions of isolation. References to water and the absence of other people suggest remoteness; consequently, islands have long been associated with isolation (Lape, 2004). Furthermore, classic fiction, such as *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954), provides additional impressions of desert islands, such as the shortage of resources, the need to be self sufficient, and fear of not being able to survive the hostile environment.

Moving to an island, away from the “mainland” of the rest of the organisation also suggests a form of rejection and exclusion from a group is a particularly powerful form of oppression (Williams, 2008). Furthermore, being a castaway—like Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)—may reflect a feeling of being powerless to control one’s circumstances; whilst isolation and banishment have typically been associated with punishment.

*Stage 3.* Moving to the final stage, Steger notes that the background of the person often provides a basis for metaphors. He recommends using the text to identify the implications that the background places on the interpretation of the metaphor. In his interview, Perry spoke of being in a senior position in his organisation, where he had considerable freedom to manage his department and develop external interests. He explained that his original CEO encouraged him to identify business opportunities for the organisation and he (Perry) was a key player in a project that became high profile and lucrative for the organisation. However, shortly after the success of this project was realised, Perry began reporting to a new CEO who took a different approach. Perry described what happened:

*At his first meeting with me, the first comment that he had made was, “I’ve been talking to others, and it seems like you’re regarded as quite a political player rather than someone who is effective.” I found this quite off-putting, because my list of achievements over the last few years I was really proud of.... He made comments such as, “Well of course you realise that I’m going to make your role redundant” and I didn’t realise this; this came as quite a surprise.*

The allusion to Perry’s potential exclusion from the organisation provides some background to his feelings of *isolation* at being “sent out” to a desert island. Perry could not understand why he was receiving treatment that was akin to punishment when he had an outstanding work record. He felt *disturbed* by the messages he was receiving, and these made Perry question his sanity at times. His use of the desert island metaphor also hints at his *fear* of exclusion from the workforce and potentially failing to survive by not being able to provide for his

family, whilst at the same time feeling *powerless* to because he could not afford to leave his job.

Perry then talked about how his CEO refused to provide funding to enable Perry's department to function; he described it as follows:

*I remember an issue where he had got some criticisms of a lab that was going to fall apart. [He said] "I need to replace this urgently" and I said, "Well I can't because you haven't given [me] any budget," [and he said] "Well I don't care, just fix it." It felt very similar to the process I mentioned earlier, being stuck out on a desert island. You had no authority. You had no resources.*

Perry used the desert island metaphor again to emphasise his feelings of *despair* in relation to the shortage of resources and his inability to manage his workplace. Perry found the situation became increasingly difficult over time and as he became further removed from the organisation; he became more aware of his isolation. He remarked, "[I was] being excluded from the meetings, which made it quite difficult to lead. I was sent out on an island, and I guess going through that process it felt a very isolating experience".

Perry said he was unable to get any support from HR staff, which added to his sense of isolation and powerlessness. He explained that his work environment was becoming increasingly difficult to control because his department received multiple audits, so eventually he found another job in a different city and resigned. Perry continued with the island metaphor to describe his exit from the organisation; he commented: "I had found a plane on my desert island and jumped to another place to live".

The island metaphor provides a useful and persuasive account of how bullying felt for Perry. His background story supports the emotions—despair, disturbance, fear, isolation, and powerlessness—that this metaphor suggests. In sum, the use of this metaphor provides an emotional dimension to Perry's account of his experiences, and the story changes from one of general organisational interactions to a basic need to survive in a hostile environment. The purpose of this analysis has been to demonstrate the way in which the metaphors support and

illustrate interviewees' feelings about their experiences and to show how the process of analysis was undertaken.

Using Steger's process, I analysed the remaining stories. When this task was complete, I requested the assistance of a colleague, who was culturally and educationally similar to the participants, as recommended by Steger (2007). In order to gain a broader perspective of the possible emotions that might emerge from the metaphors, I provided a list of metaphors for him to read. After considering the metaphors, he made notes of the emotions that he expected would emerge from his interpretation. He explained his rationale for his choices, and together we worked through each of the metaphor themes to ensure that the range of emotions was comprehensive. However, our experiences limited this approach, so there may well be additional emotions that other researchers would include.

Finally, I arranged the emergent emotions according to Storm and Storm's (1987) taxonomic study of emotional terms. This work provided six groups of primary emotions, two positive, three negative, and one related to active, passive, and cognitive states. These groups comprised a broad range of over 500 emotional terms. The emotions associated with bullying fitted into the negative groups of (1) *shame, sadness, and pain*, (2) *anxiety and fear*, and (3) *anger, hatred, and disgust*. Organising the emergent terms in this way emphasised the most prominent emotions and simplified comparisons with other studies. Section 6.1 discusses the taxonomy in more detail.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research design and methods used to answer the three research questions. It provided a rationale for the philosophical and practical methods employed, and finally it created a framework for answering the questions. The next chapter discusses the quantitative findings from the survey.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

The goal of this chapter is to answer research question 1 (“To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics?”) and to contribute to the answer for research question 2 (“How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?”) This chapter presents the findings of an online quantitative survey and uses statistical analysis to indicate the extent of negative acts associated bullying in this sector. A comparison with similar studies from Europe provides an initial benchmark for the findings. Tests then indicate the influence of power relationships on the experience of negative acts and self-identified bullying, and finally the impact of bullying on job outcomes is presented. Therefore, this chapter has three primary focus areas: (1) international comparisons, which addresses Hypothesis 1, (2) analyses of power relationships, which addresses Hypotheses 2-5 and finally, (3) the influence of negative acts on job outcomes, which addresses Hypotheses 6-7. Before delving into these three areas, this section starts with a presentation of descriptive statistics.

#### **4.1. Descriptive statistics**

This section has two parts. The first part provides a review of the negative acts and self-identified bullying frequencies used for analysis, whilst the second part shows correlations.

##### **4.1.1. Frequencies**

Frequencies indicate how regularly respondents experienced negative acts. An overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) answered that they had experienced one of the 29 behaviours measured by the NAQ during the last six months. While this rate appears very high, it is similar to results reported in other studies; for example, Bentley et al. (2009) reported a rate of 86.7% for occasional negative acts, whilst Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) reported 88%, and Einarsen and Raknes (1997) reported 88.5%, so overall this finding is generally consistent with

existing literature, if somewhat higher, and indicates these types of acts are quite common.

To gain an overview of the findings, table 6 shows the percentage of responses for each of the NAQ items. The use of percentages is intended to enable a comparison with other studies, which have tended to present their findings similarly (e.g., Cemaloglu, 2008; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). The table lists each of the 29 items used in this study and the percentage responses for *never*, *occasionally*, *monthly* and *weekly/daily*. The *weekly* and *daily* scores were combined to represent the respondents who qualify as targets of bullying according to the operational definition of experiencing at least one negative act per week for six months, which is typical in the comparison studies (Cemaloglu, 2007; Einarsen and Raknes, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001, 2002). In the present study, over a quarter of respondents (26.5%) could be considered to have been bullied using this definition. The right hand column shows the combined percentages for all “yes” responses (i.e., all responses apart from *never*) to indicate the overall percentages of negative acts reported for each item.

Table 6

*Percentage of Respondents Endorsing Each Item of the NAQ (continues on next page)*

	During the last six months how often have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?	Never %	Occasionally %	Monthly %	Weekly/daily %	Total yes % <sup>a</sup>
1	Someone withholding information which affects your performance	21.2	43.7	8.6	26.5	78.8
2	Receiving unwanted sexual attention	82.1	15.9	0.7	1.3	17.9
3	Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	47.7	30.5	5.3	15.9	51.7
4	Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	37.7	37.1	6.0	18.5	61.6
5	Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	51.0	33.8	6.6	8.6	49.0
6	Being the subject of gossip or rumours	45.7	37.1	3.3	11.9	52.3
7	Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	38.4	37.1	6.6	16.6	60.3
8	Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), or private life	57.6	21.2	9.3	10.6	41.1
9	Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	59.6	26.5	7.3	6.6	40.4
10	Receiving intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, shoving, blocking/barring the way	74.8	12.6	6.0	6.6	25.2
11	Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	65.6	24.5	2.6	6.6	33.7
12	Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse	93.4	4.0	2.0	0.0	6.0
13	Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	54.3	29.8	6.6	9.4	45.7
14	Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	55.0	25.8	6.6	11.9	44.3
15	Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	58.9	22.5	9.9	8.6	41.0

<sup>a</sup> Combined percentages for *occasionally*, *monthly*, and *weekly/daily*

Table 6 (continued from previous page)

*Percentage of Respondents Endorsing Each Item of the NAQ*

	During the last six months how often have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?	Never %	Occasionally %	Monthly %	Weekly/daily %	Total yes % <sup>a</sup>
16	Having your opinions and views ignored	15.9	52.3	13.2	16.6	82.1
17	Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or emails	68.2	20.5	4.0	4.6	29.1
18	Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you do not get on with	88.1	7.3	0.7	1.3	9.3
19	Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description	54.3	31.1	3.3	7.3	41.7
20	Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	38.4	39.7	11.9	7.3	58.9
21	Having unfair allegations made against you	57.6	28.5	7.3	4.6	40.4
22	Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work	59.6	23.8	4.6	9.9	38.3
23	Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity	81.5	11.9	2.0	1.3	15.2
24	Being pressured to not claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, travel expenses)	62.9	23.2	7.9	3.3	34.4
25	Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	76.2	13.9	3.3	3.3	20.5
26	Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed)	76.8	12.6	2.0	4.6	19.2
27	Having attempts made to find fault with your work	51.0	30.5	8.6	6.6	45.7
28	Being given an unmanageable workload	34.4	33.1	9.9	19.9	62.9
29	Being moved or transferred against your will	78.1	15.2	1.3	2.0	18.5

<sup>a</sup> Combined percentages for *occasionally*, *monthly*, and *weekly/daily*

Self-identified bullying provides a subjective measure of the extent to which respondents felt they were bullied. Respondents were asked to read a definition of bullying and select an appropriate response (see Appendix C part 5 of the survey). The findings were as follows:

No Answer	<i>n</i> = 5	(3.3%)
No	<i>n</i> = 55	(36.4%)
Yes, but rarely	<i>n</i> = 24	(15.9%)
Yes, occasionally	<i>n</i> = 33	(21.9%)
Yes, several times per month	<i>n</i> = 24	(15.9%)
Yes, several times per week	<i>n</i> = 6	(4%)
Yes, daily	<i>n</i> = 4	(2.6%)

This single measure of bullying provides an alternative to the operational approach and it produces a very different result. A majority of respondents (60%) considered themselves to have been bullied at some time in the past six months according to the subjective measure.

The figure for subjective bullying is much greater than the operational figure (by 33.5%). The difference in reporting levels contrasts with the findings of earlier studies that reported lower levels self-identified bullying (Hoel & Cooper, 2000; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). It has been proposed that lower figures for self-identified bullying may be linked to respondents' unwillingness to label themselves as targets (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001); however, the results of this study suggest that New Zealand respondents may have fewer qualms about labelling their experiences as bullying.

#### **4.1.2. Bullying correlations**

Table 7 reports means and correlations for certain key measures used in the study. The three subscales of negative acts identified by Einarsen and Raknes (1997), as detailed in the Methods Chapter (section 3.2.6), are *personal derogation*, *work-related harassment*, and *social exclusion*. The NAQ subscale scores ranged from 1 = *never* to 5 = *daily*. *Job satisfaction* had scores ranging from 1 = *very dissatisfied* to 7 = *very satisfied*. *Job performance* had scores ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. The self-identified bullying measure was coded either 0 = *never* or 1 = *yes, I feel I have been bullied* (the sum of the yes

responses). Table 7 shows the correlations, means, and standard deviations for all negative acts, job outcome variables, and self-identified bullying.

Table 7  
*Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Bullying and Job Outcomes*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Personal derogation	1.7	.68	--					
2. Work-related harassment	2.1	.80	.53**	--				
3. Social exclusion	1.7	.70	.72**	.66**	--			
4. Job satisfaction	5.0	1.1	-.37**	-.54**	-.48**	--		
5. Job performance	5.9	.77	.02	-.05	-.03	.26**	--	
6. Self-identified bullying	.60	.49	.52**	.45**	.51**	-.46**	-.05	--

\*\* $p < .01$ .

The mean scores for the three subscales ranged from 1.7 to 2.1, and the mean for overall negative acts was 1.6. This indicates that, on average, respondents reported negative acts only occasionally, and well below the midpoint ( $M = 3.0$ ) which would indicate negative acts occurring on average at a monthly rate. Thus, although nearly all respondents reported experiencing negative acts, they reported that these acts happened relatively infrequently.

Job satisfaction ( $M = 5.0$ ) and job performance ( $M = 5.9$ ) are both above the midpoint, indicating that overall, respondents were satisfied with their jobs and they perceived themselves as being good workers.

## 4.2. International comparisons

The frequency of negative acts reported by the present study was compared with the four similar studies from around the world. The purpose of this comparison is to test the first hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: Respondents in the current study will report higher frequency rates of negative acts compared to respondents in European countries.*

The hypothesis was tested in two ways, first by summarising the results of the common NAQ items used in four studies and comparing them with the same items in the current study, and second by analysing the frequency of individual items in all of the comparison studies. Table 8 shows a comparison of frequencies for the 13 items used in all studies. The numbers in this table reflect the combined weekly and daily “yes” scores for each item in each study to provide a basis for comparison. These frequencies are used because they meet the operational qualification of experiences that occurred at least once per week. It is clear from the table that the respondents in the current study experienced far higher levels of negative acts than those in the comparison studies on all items, apart from number 15, where the current study had the second highest response. It is noteworthy that in many cases the items in the current study had considerably higher scores than those reported in the comparison studies (see items 1, 7, and 16 for examples). This finding provides support for hypothesis 1, as the frequency rates from the present study are higher than the European ones.

To expand on the findings, I compared the most frequent items from the current study with the results of the other studies. Item 1 “Someone withholding information which affects your performance”, had the highest frequency in the present study, with 26.5% of respondents saying that they had experienced this behaviour at least once per week within the last six months. Within the other four studies, the scores for item 16 ranged from 1% (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997) to 8.2% (Cemaloglu, 2007), with an average frequency of 9.2%; therefore, the frequency for respondents in the current study are more than 17.3 percentage points higher than the average of all the studies on this item.

Table 8  
*NAQ Frequencies Comparison*

NAQ items	E&R 1997 <sup>a</sup> %	M&E 2001 %	M&E 2002 %	Cem 2007 %	Present study %
1 Someone withholding information which affects your performance	1	4.6	5.9	8.2	26.5
3 Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	4.3	1.2	0.9	5.4	15.9
4 Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	3.7	8.6	7.7	11.2	18.5
5 Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	1.1	1.7	0.9	4.5	8.6
6 Being the subject of gossip or rumours	2.2	3.1	1.9	5.4	11.9
7 Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	1.1	1.5	0.9	2.4	16.6
8 Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), your attitudes or your private life	1.1	2.2	1.8	6.6	10.6
9 Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	0.4	1.8	1	4.8	6.6
11 Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	0.4	0.5	0.9	3.3	6.6
13 Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	1.1	1.1	0.9	4.5	9.4
14 Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	2	1.7	0.3	5.4	11.9
15 Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	1.3	2.2	1.4	10	8.6
16 Having your opinions and views ignored	3.1	2.7	2.7	9.9	16.6

*Note.* Percentages represent combined “yes” responses from respondents who reported experiencing negative acts weekly or daily in the previous six months. <sup>a</sup> The studies are labelled as follows: E&R 1997 = Einarsen and Raknes (1997), M&E 2001 = Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001), M&E 2002 = Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002), Cem 2007 = Cemaloglu (2007)

The item with the second highest frequency in the present study is item 4, “Being ordered to do work below your level of competence”. The current study indicated that this negative act was also comparatively frequent, with 18.5% respondents saying they had experienced this behaviour at least once per week within the last six months. Within the other four studies, the scores ranged from 3.7% (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997) to 11.2% (Cemaloglu, 2007), with an average frequency of 9.9%. This again indicates that the frequency in the current study is higher (specifically, 8.6 percentage points higher) than the average of all the studies on this item. Overall, these findings suggest that respondents in the current study experience higher levels than those in the European studies, and this provides strong support for hypothesis 1.

In the process of testing hypothesis 1, an interesting and serendipitous finding emerged. During the analysis it became apparent that of the 13 items common to all the studies, three were among the top four most frequent items for each of the studies (including the present study, but with one exception). These items were amongst the highest frequencies in all five studies with the exception of NAQ1 which came 11<sup>th</sup> in Einarsen and Raknes (1997). Thus, despite the wide range of frequencies, targets seem to have experienced the same forms of negative behaviour most frequently, despite variations in countries and organisational settings. This suggests that, while the prevalence of bullying is generally higher in New Zealand, the types of negative acts experienced across countries appear similar. Reading from left to right, table 9 shows the rankings of the items in each of the studies.

Table 9 *Ranking of Response Frequencies*

Study	NAQ 1 <sup>a</sup>	NAQ 4 <sup>b</sup>	NAQ 16 <sup>c</sup>
Einarsen and Raknes (1997)	11 <sup>th</sup> (1%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (3.7%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (3.1%)
Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (4.6%)	1 <sup>st</sup> (8.6%)	4 <sup>th</sup> (2.7%)
Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (5.9%)	1 <sup>st</sup> (7.7%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (2.7%)
Cemaloglu (2007)	4 <sup>th</sup> (8.2%)	1 <sup>st</sup> (11.2%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (9.9%)
Present study	1 <sup>st</sup> (26.5%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (18.5%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (16.6%)

<sup>a</sup> Someone withholding information which affects your performance.

<sup>b</sup> Being ordered to do work below your level of competence.

<sup>c</sup> Having your opinions and views ignored.

As this additional finding applied only to the 13 common items, further analysis was undertaken to discover whether the finding also applied to the full

range of items presented in each study. It was found that when considering the studies individually, to account for the differing ranges of items asked, the top three items identified in the present study appeared in the top four for *all* comparison studies, (apart from NAQ 1 in Einarsen and Raknes 1997, as noted above). Therefore, the experiences of respondents in the current study appear to be part of a wider phenomenon which seems reasonably consistent in occurrence, if not in strength. This adds credibility to the findings, as the pattern of responses in the data matches that found in four other studies that used the NAQ, in three other countries.

### **4.3. Negative acts and power relationships**

This section presents the results of tests designed to examine hypotheses 2 to 5. Tests of the frequency of negative acts examine four comparisons: (1) *women versus men*, (2) *part-time versus full-time workers*, (3) *temporary versus permanent workers* and (4) *Maori versus non-Maori*. The rationale behind these tests is that bullying represents a relationship of power, or authority, and given that some groups typically have less power in the workplace, they may be subject to more negative acts. Specifically, the following hypotheses were tested:

*Hypothesis 2: Women will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared to men.*

*Hypothesis 3: Part-time workers will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared to full-time workers.*

*Hypothesis 4: Temporary contract workers will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared permanent contract workers.*

*Hypothesis 5: Maori workers will report higher frequency rates of negative acts and self-identified bullying compared to non-Maori workers.*

The four tables in this section show the results of *t*-tests conducted on the responses to 29 NAQ items, three NAQ subscales, and self-identified bullying. The purpose of these *t*-tests is to identify whether some groups experience more negative acts than others. Both the NAQ five-point scale and the self-identified six-point scale were reduced to a dichotomous variable with the items recoded as *yes* for any occurrence in last six months, regardless of frequency and *no* for never

in the last six months (Haar & O'Driscoll, 2005). Recoding simplifies the range of timeframes used in the survey and it is not uncommon in the literature to combine the results for analysis purposes (e.g., Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007; Mathisen et al., 2008; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001).

The tables in this section read from left to right. The mean score is calculated from results where *no* = 0 to *yes* = 1; in effect, the percentage of yes answers is the mean. The right-hand column lists the *t*-test differences. Overall, 33 *t*-tests were conducted; however, multiple *t*-tests may increase the chances of a type 1 error occurring (Field, 2006), owing to the large number of measures tested. In order to overcome this potential problem, a more conservative approach to interpreting the results was adopted, using  $p < .01$  to detect significant differences.

#### **4.3.1. Female versus male workers**

In table 10, *t*-test results show there are no significant differences between women and men using  $p < .01$  to detect significant differences towards the items and measures. Therefore, there is no evidence of more negative acts and self-identified bullying from female respondents, providing no support for hypothesis 2.

#### **4.3.2. Part-time versus full-time workers**

Table 11 shows the results of the *t*-tests for part-time and full-time status differences (hypothesis 3). The list of negative act items and measures in this table shows 2 significant differences. Full-time workers did not report fewer negative acts on a single item. Rather, the general pattern was that part-time workers reported fewer negative acts, with the difference achieving statistical significance at the .01 level on 2 of the 29 items. The greatest differences were reported on item 9, "Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger or rage" (part-time workers = 32%, full-time workers = 60%,  $t = -2.646$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and item 11, "Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job" (part-time workers = 16%, full-time workers = 49%,  $t = -3.136$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Overall, there is some evidence of significantly higher levels of negative acts by employment status, at the more conservative  $p < .01$  confidence levels. However, the direction is opposite to the hypothesis, which indicates that part-time workers are not subject to more negative acts owing to their lower

Table 10

*T-Test Results by Gender for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures (continues on next page)*

		Female ( <i>n</i> = 104)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 46)		Difference
During the last six months how often <sup>a</sup> have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?		<i>M</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -test
1	Someone withholding information which affects your performance	0.91	0.28	0.80	0.40	1.907*
2	Receiving unwanted sexual attention	0.25	0.44	0.13	0.34	1.652
3	Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	0.63	0.49	0.61	0.49	0.188
4	Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	0.67	0.47	0.65	0.48	0.249
5	Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	0.58	0.50	0.61	0.49	-0.362
6	Being the subject of gossip or rumours	0.60	0.49	0.67	0.47	-0.901
7	Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	0.63	0.48	0.74	0.44	-1.25
8	Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), or private life	0.44	0.50	0.48	0.51	-0.405
9	Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	0.56	0.50	0.52	0.51	0.515
10	Receiving intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, shoving, blocking/barring the way	0.34	0.47	0.35	0.48	-0.134
11	Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	0.40	0.49	0.50	0.51	-1.093
12	Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse	0.06	0.25	0.17	0.38	-2.021*
13	Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	0.53	0.50	0.59	0.50	-0.656
14	Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	0.57	0.50	0.43	0.50	1.50
15	Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	0.48	0.50	0.52	0.51	-0.46
16	Having your opinions and views ignored	0.90	0.30	0.89	0.31	0.235
17	Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or emails	0.40	0.49	0.39	0.49	0.144
18	Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you do not get on with	0.12	0.32	0.15	0.36	-0.621
19	Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description	0.44	0.50	0.57	0.50	-1.389

20	Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	0.64	0.48	0.70	0.47	-0.61
21	Having unfair allegations made against you	0.53	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.813
22	Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work	0.47	0.50	0.48	0.51	-0.08
23	Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity	0.22	0.42	0.17	0.38	0.655
24	Being pressured to not claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, travel expenses)	0.41	0.49	0.43	0.50	-0.242
26	Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed)	0.31	0.46	0.26	0.44	0.578
27	Having attempts made to find fault with your work	0.58	0.50	0.59	0.50	-0.114
28	Being given an unmanageable workload	0.71	0.46	0.72	0.46	-0.073
29	Being moved or transferred against your will	0.29	0.46	0.35	0.48	-0.723
	Personal derogation subscale	1.70	0.65	1.80	0.73	-0.28
	Work-related harassment subscale	2.00	0.74	2.20	0.93	-1.054
	Social exclusion subscale	1.60	0.64	1.90	0.79	-2.569*
	Self-identified bullying	0.61	0.49	0.70	0.47	-1.05

---

*Note.* All tests one-tailed.

<sup>a</sup> All “yes” responses summed, hence the strikethrough in the original item.

<sup>b</sup> *Yes* = 1 and *No* = 0

\* $p < .05$ .

Table 11

*T-Test Results by Part-Time Status for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures (continues on next page)*

		Part-time (n = 25)		Full-time (n = 126)		Difference
During the last six months how often <sup>a</sup> have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?		<i>M</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -test
1	Someone withholding information which affects your performance	0.88	0.33	0.88	0.33	-0.013
2	Receiving unwanted sexual attention	0.20	0.41	0.21	0.41	-0.159
3	Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	0.44	0.51	0.66	0.48	-2.077*
4	Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	0.56	0.51	0.69	0.46	-1.265
5	Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	0.52	0.51	0.6	0.49	-0.769
6	Being the subject of gossip or rumours	0.40	0.50	0.67	0.47	-2.550*
7	Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	0.60	0.50	0.68	0.47	-0.797
8	Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), or private life	0.32	0.48	0.48	0.50	-1.506
9	Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	0.32	0.48	0.60	0.49	-2.646**
10	Receiving intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, shoving, blocking/barring the way	0.16	0.37	0.38	0.49	-2.142*
11	Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	0.16	0.37	0.49	0.50	-3.136**
12	Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse	0.08	0.28	0.10	0.31	-0.352
13	Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	0.36	0.49	0.59	0.49	-2.103*
14	Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	0.36	0.49	0.56	0.50	-1.871*
15	Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	0.36	0.49	0.52	0.50	-1.498
16	Having your opinions and views ignored	0.88	0.33	0.90	0.29	-0.376
17	Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or emails	0.24	0.44	0.44	0.50	-1.837*
18	Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you do not get on with	0.04	0.20	0.15	0.36	-1.494
19	Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.50	-0.91

20	Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	0.56	0.51	0.68	0.47	-1.181
21	Having unfair allegations made against you	0.28	0.46	0.56	0.50	-2.555*
22	Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work	0.40	0.50	0.49	0.50	-0.838
23	Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity	0.12	0.33	0.22	0.42	-1.153
24	Being pressured to not claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, travel expenses)	0.36	0.49	0.44	0.50	-0.704
25	Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	0.16	0.37	0.31	0.46	-1.515
26	Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed)	0.24	0.44	0.30	0.46	-0.616
27	Having attempts made to find fault with your work	0.48	0.51	0.60	0.49	-1.138
28	Being given an unmanageable workload	0.52	0.51	0.75	0.43	-2.397*
29	Being moved or transferred against your will	0.32	0.48	0.30	0.46	0.182
	Personal derogation subscale	1.40	0.38	1.80	0.70	-2.389*
	Work-related harassment subscale	1.80	0.77	2.10	0.81	-1.537
	Social exclusion subscale	1.50	0.48	1.80	0.72	-1.859*
	Self-identified bullying	0.52	0.51	0.66	0.48	-1.316

---

*Note.* All tests one-tailed.

<sup>a</sup> All “yes” responses summed, hence the strikethrough in the original item.

<sup>b</sup> *Yes* = 1 and *No* = 0

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

power role at work. Overall, the findings provide no support for hypothesis 3.

### **4.3.3. Temporary versus permanent workers**

Table 12 shows the results of the *t*-tests for workers with temporary and permanent contracts (hypothesis 4). This table shows there are 5 significant differences between temporary contract workers and permanent contract workers amongst the total list of bullying items and measures.

Employees on temporary contracts reported significantly more negative acts than permanent contract workers only on item 12 “Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse” (temporary contract workers = 23%, permanent contract workers = 9%,  $t = 1.661$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, contrary to the hypothesis, the 4 other differences reveal temporary contract workers report fewer negative acts than permanent contract workers with the greatest differences being on: item 5 “Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks” (temporary contract workers = 15%, permanent contract workers = 63%,  $t = -3.447$ ,  $p < .01$ ), item 16 “Having your opinions and views ignored” (temporary contract workers = 69%, permanent contract workers = 92%,  $t = -2.671$ ,  $p < .01$ ), item 20 “Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines” (temporary contract workers = 31%, permanent contract workers = 52%,  $t = -2.886$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and item 22 “Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work” (temporary contract workers = 8%, permanent contract workers = 51%,  $t = -3.095$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

There is evidence of greater levels of negative acts between temporary contract and permanent contract respondents, but the direction is mostly in the opposite direction to that hypothesised with only one item higher for temporary contract workers. Overall, these findings provide no support for hypothesis 4.

Table 12

*T-Test Results by Temporary Contract Workers for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures (continues on next page)*

		Temporary ( <i>n</i> = 13)		Permanent ( <i>n</i> = 138)		Difference
During the last six months how often <sup>a</sup> have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?		<i>M</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -test
1	Someone withholding information which affects your performance	0.85	0.38	0.88	0.32	-0.401
2	Receiving unwanted sexual attention	0.23	0.44	0.21	0.41	0.173
3	Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	0.46	0.52	0.64	0.48	-1.251
4	Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	0.54	0.52	0.68	0.47	-1.042
5	Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	0.15	0.38	0.63	0.48	-3.447**
6	Being the subject of gossip or rumours	0.46	0.52	0.64	0.48	-1.251
7	Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	0.62	0.51	0.67	0.47	-0.426
8	Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), or private life	0.31	0.48	0.47	0.50	-1.127
9	Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	0.38	0.51	0.57	0.50	-1.302
10	Receiving intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, shoving, blocking/barring the way	0.23	0.44	0.36	0.48	-0.898
11	Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	0.23	0.44	0.36	0.48	-1.571
12	Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse	0.23	0.44	0.09	0.28	1.661**
13	Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	0.31	0.48	0.57	0.50	-1.843*
14	Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	0.46	0.52	0.54	0.50	-0.513
15	Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	0.31	0.48	0.51	0.50	-1.426
16	Having your opinions and views ignored	0.69	0.48	0.92	0.27	-2.671**
17	Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or emails	0.31	0.48	0.41	0.49	-0.736
18	Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you do not get on with	0.15	0.38	0.13	0.34	0.237
19	Systematically to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description	0.31	0.48	0.50	0.50	-1.325

20	Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	0.31	0.48	0.52	0.50	-2.886**
21	Having unfair allegations made against you	0.38	0.51	0.52	0.50	-0.942
22	Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work	0.08	0.28	0.51	0.50	-3.095**
23	Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity	0.15	0.38	0.21	0.41	-0.478
24	Being pressured to not claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, travel expenses)	0.23	0.44	0.44	0.50	-1.474
25	Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	0.23	0.44	0.29	0.46	-0.449
26	Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed)	0.08	0.28	0.32	0.46	-1.787*
27	Having attempts made to find fault with your work	0.38	0.51	0.60	0.49	-1.517
28	Being given an unmanageable workload	0.46	0.52	0.74	0.44	-2.138*
29	Being moved or transferred against your will	0.08	0.28	0.33	0.48	-1.875*
	Personal derogation subscale	1.40	0.65	1.80	0.67	-1.746*
	Work-related harassment subscale	1.60	0.53	2.10	0.81	-2.060*
	Social exclusion subscale	1.50	0.63	1.70	0.70	-0.953
	Self-identified bullying	0.46	0.51	0.65	0.48	-1.365

*Note.* All tests one-tailed.

<sup>a</sup> All “yes” responses summed, hence the strikethrough in the original item.

<sup>b</sup> *Yes* = 1 and *No* = 0

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

#### 4.3.4. Maori versus non-Maori workers

Table 13 shows results of the *t*-tests for differences between Maori and non-Maori employees (hypothesis 5). In this table, there are 10 significant differences between respondents who are Maori workers and non-Maori workers amongst the total list of items and measures. All significant differences were in the hypothesised direction.

The greatest differences were towards item 3, “Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work” (Maori workers = 94%, non-Maori workers = 58%,  $t = 2.940$ ,  $p < .01$ ), item 6, “Being the subject of gossip and rumours” (Maori workers = 94%, non-Maori workers = 58%,  $t = 2.940$ ,  $p < .01$ ), item 8, “Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), your attitudes or your private life” (Maori workers = 82%, non-Maori workers = 41%,  $t = 3.315$ ,  $p < .01$ ), item 22, “Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work” (Maori workers = 82%, non-Maori workers = 43%,  $t = 3.115$ ,  $p < .01$ ), item 23, “Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity” (Maori workers = 65%, non-Maori workers = 15%,  $t = 5.163$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and item 27, “Having attempts made to find fault with your work” (Maori workers = 88%, non-Maori workers = 54%,  $t = 2.705$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Furthermore, there was a significant difference towards self-identified bullying (Maori workers = 94%, non-Maori workers = 60%,  $t = 2.833$ ,  $p < .01$ ); and similarly towards personal derogation (Maori workers  $M = 2.3$ , non-Maori workers  $M = 1.7$ ,  $t = -3.151$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Overall, there is plenty of evidence of greater levels of negative acts and self-identified bullying of Maori respondents compared to non-Maori respondents. These findings support the proposition that Maori are more likely to be the targets of bullying and they provide strong support for hypothesis 5.

Table 13

*T-Test Results by Maori Ethnicity for Each Item on the NAQ and Combined Measures (continues on next page)*

		Maori ( <i>n</i> = 17)		Non-Maori ( <i>n</i> = 134)		Difference
During the last six months how often <sup>a</sup> have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?		<i>M</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -test
1	Someone withholding information which affects your performance	0.94	0.24	0.87	0.33	0.812
2	Receiving unwanted sexual attention	0.18	0.39	0.22	0.41	-0.377
3	Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	0.94	0.24	0.58	0.50	2.940**
4	Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	0.71	0.47	0.66	0.47	0.342
5	Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	0.65	0.49	0.58	0.50	0.51
6	Being the subject of gossip or rumours	0.94	0.24	0.58	0.50	2.940**
7	Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	0.82	0.39	0.65	0.48	1.439
8	Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), or private life	0.82	0.39	0.41	0.49	3.315**
9	Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	0.76	0.44	0.53	0.50	1.845*
10	Receiving intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, shoving, blocking/barring the way	0.47	0.51	0.33	0.47	1.16
11	Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	0.71	0.47	0.4	0.49	2.401*
12	Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse	0.18	0.39	0.09	0.29	1.126
13	Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	0.76	0.44	0.52	0.50	1.902*
14	Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	0.59	0.51	0.52	0.50	0.509
15	Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	0.76	0.44	0.46	0.50	2.374*
16	Having your opinions and views ignored	0.94	0.24	0.90	0.31	0.59
17	Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or emails	0.53	0.51	0.39	0.49	1.116
18	Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you do not get on with	0.12	0.33	0.13	0.34	-0.19
19	Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description	0.76	0.44	0.45	0.50	2.498*

20	Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	0.71	0.47	0.66	0.48	0.401
21	Having unfair allegations made against you	0.76	0.44	0.48	0.50	2.253*
22	Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work	0.82	0.39	0.43	0.50	3.115**
23	Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity	0.65	0.49	0.15	0.36	5.163***
24	Being pressured to not claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, travel expenses)	0.65	0.49	0.40	0.49	1.990*
25	Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	0.35	0.49	0.28	0.45	0.658
26	Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed)	0.53	0.51	0.26	0.44	2.318*
27	Having attempts made to find fault with your work	0.88	0.33	0.54	0.50	2.705**
28	Being given an unmanageable workload	0.76	0.44	0.71	0.46	0.477
29	Being moved or transferred against your will	0.35	0.49	0.30	0.46	0.457
	Personal derogation subscale	2.30	0.55	1.70	0.67	3.151**
	Work-related harassment subscale	2.30	0.75	2	0.81	1.146
	Social exclusion subscale	2	0.58	1.70	0.70	1.578
	Self-identified bullying	0.94	0.24	0.60	0.49	2.833**

*Note.* All tests one-tailed.

<sup>a</sup> All “yes” responses summed, hence the strikethrough in the original item.

<sup>b</sup> *Yes* = 1 and *No* = 0

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### 4.4. Negative acts and job outcomes

The test of links between the NAQ subscales, job satisfaction, and job performance tests hypotheses 6 (“Higher rates of negative acts will be associated with lower job satisfaction”) and 7 (“Higher rates of negative acts will be associated with lower job performance”). Table 7 (in section 4.1.2.) shows that job satisfaction was significantly correlated with personal derogation ( $r = -.37, p < .01$ ), work-related harassment ( $r = -.54, p < .01$ ), and social exclusion ( $r = -.48, p < .01$ ). Overall, there is strong support for hypothesis 6 with all three subscales of bullying, linking negatively with job satisfaction. However, this was not the case for job performance as it was not significantly correlated with the three subscales of bullying: personal derogation ( $r = .02$ , non-significant), work-related harassment ( $r = -.05$ , non-significant), and social exclusion ( $r = -.03$ , non-significant), providing no support for hypothesis 7. These findings are replicated with the self-identified measure of bullying, with it being significantly correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = -.46, p < .01$ ) but not job performance ( $r = -.05$ , non-significant).

Since there are significant correlations between the subscales and the job satisfaction outcome, further analysis tested the relative effects of various forms of bullying on job satisfaction. Regression analysis is a conceptually simple method for investigating functional relationships among variables (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2006). The present study uses regression analysis to test the influence of the subscales on job satisfaction. Chatterjee and Hadi (2006) noted that one major purpose of regression analysis is to “evaluate the importance of individual predictors” (pp. 16-17). This is particularly relevant in the present study where there are three NAQ subscales, as it may allow us to determine whether one dimension is more powerful than others in predicting job satisfaction.

Hierarchical regression analysis tested job satisfaction as the dependent variable. A model tests the three subscales (personal derogation, work-related harassment, and social exclusion) as predictor variables. The potential influences of four demographic variables (gender, permanent status, full-time status, and ethnicity) were controlled, as these have been highlighted earlier as potentially influencing bullying. The control variables were entered in step 1, whilst the three NAQ subscales were entered in step 2.

Table 14

*Regression Analysis of NAQ subscales Towards Job Satisfaction*

Variables	Job satisfaction model With three bullying dimensions
<i>Step 1: controls</i>	
Gender	.08
Permanent status	-.05
Full-time status	.00
Ethnicity	-.22**
R <sup>2</sup> change	.09*
<i>Step 2: NAQ subscales</i>	
Personal derogation	-.02
Work-related harassment	-.39***
Social exclusion	-.21*
R <sup>2</sup> change	.29***
Total r <sup>2</sup>	.38
Adjusted r <sup>2</sup>	.34
F statistic	10.890***

*Note.* Standardised regression coefficients; all significance tests were single-tailed.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 14 shows that two of the three NAQ subscales significantly and negatively link to job satisfaction. Work-related harassment is significantly predictive of job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.39, p < .001$ ), as is social exclusion ( $\beta = -.21, p < .05$ ). From the  $r^2$  change figures in step 2, the three NAQ subscales account for sizeable and significant amounts of variance towards job satisfaction (29%,  $p < .001$ ). Overall, the model with bullying is large and significant ( $r^2 = .38, f = 10.890, p < .001$ ).

In summary, despite limitations, as a minimum the findings in this study suggest that substantial levels of bullying exist within the ITP sector. The analysis has shown that respondents in the current study appear to experience high frequencies of negative behaviour compared with studies from other countries. In the current study, women and men report similar rates of negative acts, whilst contrary to expectation, part-time and temporary workers report lower rates than full-time and permanent workers. As expected, Maori workers report significantly higher rates of negative acts than non-Maori workers. Finally, bullying affects job satisfaction negatively but job performance is unaffected.

During the analysis, an interesting, additional result emerged. Although this finding is not in response to a specific research question, analysis of the international studies showed that the most frequently occurring NAQ items in the present study (i.e., information being withheld, being ordered to do low level work, and being ignored) are also most frequently reported in the comparison studies. Targets in all five studies (including the present one) report these three negative acts most frequently (usually within the top four highest frequencies), which suggests that experiences of particular bullying acts may be universal. Finally, bullying linked significantly and negatively with job satisfaction. Chapter 7 discusses the findings of the current chapter in more detail. The next chapter presents the first set of interview-analysis results.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERVIEW RESULTS**

#### **THE CONSTRUCTION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING**

The purpose of this chapter is to present results from interviews with targets of bullying and HR workers. The interviews were designed to answer research questions 2 (“How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?”) and 3 (“How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?”) A discussion of the findings for question 3 appears in Chapter 6.

As discussed in section 3.3.5., thematic analysis was used to find patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To reiterate briefly, each transcript was read line-by-line then the data was open-coded (Emerson et al., 1995). Comments and codes that had relevance to the construction of a workplace bullying process, such as reasons for selection and experiences, were grouped into over-arching themes. All of the themes divided into subthemes. These subthemes contain sets of similar comments that link to the broader, overarching theme. Although the themes drew inductively from the data, I used the findings of Leymann (1996), Lutgen-Sandvik (2003), and Clair (1993) as sensitising concepts to guide the data analysis (Bowen, 2006).

The goals of this chapter are to (1) explain in detail how each of the themes was constructed, (2) provide a rich description of experiences in relation to the themes, (3) link the findings to the literature, and (4) to show how the themes together suggest a model of the bullying process. The chapter starts with a discussion of the themes of *precipitating structures* and *target selection*. Following the chronological sequence of the bullying process, it moves to *triggers* and then *abusive behaviours, constraints, resistance, organisational sequestering*, and finally *resolution*. The chapter ends with the presentation and discussion of the process model.

### **5.1. Precipitating Structure**

The first theme, precipitating structures, focuses on the environment in which bullying occurred. As discussed in the literature review (section 2.4.1.), bullying

does not exist in a vacuum, instead it requires a suitable context to enable its emergence and continuation. Salin (2003b) created a model (see Figure 1 in section 2.4.1.) to define the organisational structures and processes that enable bullying to occur. Consequently, Salin's model influenced the title of this theme. In the present study, interviewees talked of different types of precipitating structures that fit into two subthemes: *restructuring* and *new people*.

### **5.1.1. Restructuring**

The subtheme of restructuring contains interviewees' comments that relate to major changes in organisational structure. All of the 31 target stories were set in organisations that had recently restructured, were in the process of doing so, or were considering restructuring. In several cases, the targets perceived they were directly at risk of losing their jobs ( $n = 9$ ), and this uncertainty about their continuing employment influenced and constrained their decision-making. Some of the interviewees explicitly referred to restructure plans in the context of their own bullying and they explained how this increased pressure manifested itself in their organisations. For example, academic Ava explained how a sudden drop in income from international students led to the need to cut the number of jobs, "Overnight, all of our part-time lecturers were axed. So we started [the year] down in numbers of students and with a lot less staff, and there was another round of what I'd call workplace bullying". At a different ITP, technician Malcolm spoke of the increased pressure that occurred once his department was required to restructure. Initially, he had expected to go through a normal consultation process but a change in his circumstances meant this did not occur, he explained, "They wanted to change the department to save money and my boss said my job was safe but when I hurt my [self] I became an easy target for them".

When jobs are at risk, staff may be unwilling to challenge bullying and they may choose to take fewer risks than they may have done in more secure times. Conversely, fear of redundancy sometimes resulted in groups of employees mobbing their managers to try to prevent change. For example, when Brandon became CEO of a small rural institute, he found himself having to restructure the organisation to save money. Brandon described his organisation as follows, "It was a very comfortable, [but] ineffective and unviable environment. I had to deal with all the overstaffing issues quickly." Shortly afterwards, Brandon was accused

of inappropriate behaviour towards some of his female staff which quickly developed into mobbing. Brandon explained that there was no evidence and he denied that anything had happened. However, the important point is that he felt the financial pressures and the proposed restructure of the organisation had created unrest amongst staff that led them to behave in ways that they might not have considered in more settled times.

### **5.1.2. New people**

The second subtheme, new people, focuses on the ways in which the arrival of a new person disrupted working relationships and set the scene for subsequent bullying. The arrival of a new manager was frequently reported as being a factor in the onset of bullying ( $n = 10$ ). For example, academic Cindy said she had worked in the same position and received good feedback on her work for over a decade; however, this changed when her new manager arrived, she explained: “I’d been there for years and years before that, and had other managers, and never had any problems with other people; it’s just when we got this new person in [that things went wrong]”. Cindy said that, although she continued to do her work to the same standard, her work became unacceptable. The new manager removed Cindy’s leadership responsibilities and, according to Cindy, overloaded her with teaching that limited her opportunity to develop her abilities. Similarly, academic Denny had a long career in a variety of teaching and programme management roles before her new manager started mistreating her. Denny described her situation as follows: “Someone new comes in with this dictatorial attitude and is not interested in anything you say, and is browbeating and bullying you into doing things their way, when their way is based on insufficient information or lack of understanding”. Denny said that her new manager disregarded her knowledge and regularly abused her by shouting at her, using aggressive gestures, and blocking her access to resources, which caused her considerable distress.

Although new managers were cited most frequently as being responsible for the onset of bullying, occasionally new colleagues were blamed ( $n = 2$ ). For example, academic Ethan began to share an office with a newly arrived colleague. Almost immediately, the colleague verbally abused and undermined Ethan as a way of showing his professional superiority, and thus Ethan concluded, “He is the single-most, rudest person I’ve ever met in my life.” Although the person also

dominated meetings, Ethan felt he received the full impact of the negative behaviour as he had to spend so much time in the person's company; eventually the constant abuse deteriorated into bullying.

### *Discussion*

In summary, a significant change, or proposed significant change, to work relationships provided a suitable environment for bullying to germinate. Scholars have shown that restructuring and changes of manager or changes of the workgroup can all contribute to the creation of a precipitating structure that is conducive to bullying (Rayner, 1997; Salin, 2003b), so the findings in this section are consistent with extant research on bullying. It is important to note that restructures are common occurrences in ITPs, as the sector responds to government pressures for greater efficiency, whilst changes in managers and colleagues are part of normal working life. Therefore, a precipitating structure for bullying is frequently present in the sector.

Other precipitating structures emerged in previous research but these did not appear in the current study. Specifically, Salin (2003a) found that some organisations allowed power to weigh in the perpetrator's favour and this enabled perpetrators to use bullying tactics unchallenged. When repercussions occurred, these were minimal, resulting in bullying being a low risk and low cost option for perpetrators. In the current study, targets did not mention power and the absence of repercussions as being antecedent to bullying. Although some interviewees talked about an imbalance of power between them and the perpetrator, it was in the context of constraints to resolving bullying rather than as a causal factor precipitating bullying.

Overall, for participants in the current study, restructures and new people provided the precipitating structures for workplace bullying to exist. With a suitable structure in place, the selection of a target could commence.

## **5.2. Target selection**

The second major theme identified was target selection. The selection of targets is an important "step" in the process of bullying. Unlike general bad behaviour--which may be simple discourtesy or an inability to manage a temper--bullying requires perpetrators to direct behaviours at a specific person, who becomes the

target for repeated abuse (Alberts, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Tracy, 2005). In this study, the majority of interviewees said they knew why the perpetrators had chosen them and some interviewees gave more than one reason for becoming a target. The target selection theme contains the subthemes of *standing out*, *standing up*, and *standing back*.

### **5.2.1. Standing out**

The first subtheme is standing out. This was the most frequent reason given for being selected as a target ( $n = 21$ ). In this subtheme, interviewees thought that perpetrators selected them because they came to the attention of the perpetrator in a negative way. They gave a variety of reasons for standing out, including being superior to the perpetrator in terms of knowledge or success, or simply because they were different to the perpetrator in some way. For example, technician Felix thought that his colleague was jealous of his ceramics business, he said, “Our department is known for its egos.... She [my colleague] knew that I had quite an output [of saleable work]”. Felix felt the open knowledge of his success left him in a weakened position that made him more susceptible to bullying. Similarly, academic Gerry believed that having a broad range of skills meant that he regularly came to the attention of his less technically able manager, he explained:

*Not many people have the wide range of knowledge [that I do]; not trying to blow my own trumpet here, but it is very hard to get people who have the full range of stuff. Plus, I have quite good computer skills as well.*

Not everyone had Gerry’s confidence. When administrator Huia started to receive unpleasant messages from her new supervisor she did not understand what was happening to her until a colleague pointed out that the new person might see her as a threat. Huia described what happened: “Someone said to me, ‘You know heaps more than what she does about academic matters’”. Although academic assistance was part of Huia’s role, she began to realise that her supervisor did not view it in this way. Finally, Brandon felt that being different to his new team of staff, with his distinctive overseas accent and his recent move from an urban institute to rural one, was enough to make him stand out; he said, “I was an outsider; I was quite flamboyant, with bright ties, and a bit in your face”. He felt

that his differences, combined with being new to a conservative town, made him an obvious target for potential bullies. Therefore, these interviewees felt that they stood out by making the perpetrators feel inferior in some way, and this led to them being more susceptible to selection as targets for bullying.

### **5.2.2. Standing up**

In the second most frequent subtheme, standing up, targets thought they were selected because they had previously challenged or stood up to the perpetrator in some way ( $n = 10$ ). For example, following a series of arguments with her Head of School, Ava felt that she had drawn attention to herself. She explained: “We clashed on a set of values which were basically academic values, but it wasn't long before that clash had become so public and apparent that it probably made myself and my colleagues a target”. Similarly, an earlier attempt to manage her manager's unprofessional behaviour provided a rationale for academic Isabella's selection as a target, she remarked, “I did take a complaint against him about it and he doesn't like that”. Interviewees described other types of standing up that resulted in their selection as targets. Voicing an opinion was sufficient to draw Jessica to the attention of a perpetrator, as she found when she made negative remarks about a colleague's home country; she said, “I had made comments about China and she was upset about that”. Jessica explained that she had apologised for causing offence but she still found herself a target for her colleague's subsequent bullying. Therefore, standing up to another person, by arguing or having a difference of opinion, may lead to selection as a target for bullying.

### **5.2.3. Standing back**

In the third, and least frequent, subtheme of standing back, targets thought they were selected because they had been too compliant and shown an absence of assertiveness towards the perpetrator ( $n = 2$ ). For example, Felix blamed himself for not being more proactive when his colleague began verbally abusing him, he explained: “I'm not terribly assertive”. Felix said he thought he should have taken the initiative and resolved the situation immediately, but this was not his usual style. Similarly, academic Ken thought his compliance towards his Head of School, when faced with a class that was twice the planned size, may have worked against him; he remarked, “Whether he perceived that as weakness I don't know,

it is entirely possible". So failing to respond in an assertive manner, and thus standing back, may have left the interviewees exposed as potential targets.

### ***Discussion***

Targets believed perpetrators chose them because they: (1) stood out from their colleagues, often by presenting a perceived threat of some sort to the perpetrator, (2) stood up to the perpetrator and presented a challenge in some way, or (3) stood back and allowed the perpetrator to take advantage of them. Overall, targets felt that their difference from the perpetrator, or from the perpetrator's expectations, especially when the difference was negatively valenced (e.g., threatening or weaker), led to their selection for bullying.

The workplace bullying literature provides a range of reasons to explain why some people become targets. Authors of self-help books proposed that employees who stand out from the rest of the work group are likely to be selected (Field, 1996; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003) and this position received empirical support from the work of Archer (1999) and O'Moore et al. (1998). Those who stood back, owing to vulnerability or low assertiveness skills, were also viewed as likely to become targets (Adams & Crawford, 1992), but to date this view has lacked empirical support. Therefore, the target selection theme confirms existing research by finding that targets believe they are chosen because they stand out. The finding that targets also explain their selection as being a result of either standing up for themselves or standing back when they could have been assertive provides an alternative perspective. The three-part categorisation of standing out, standing up, and standing back provides a practical breakdown of the different ways in which selection occurred. In addition, identifying the underlying role of negatively valenced differences in target selection is helpful in understanding this part of the bullying process. The next section presents findings relating to the events that targets felt were responsible for starting the full process of workplace bullying.

### **5.3. Trigger**

A trigger is an occurrence that is responsible for the start of bullying. In this study, targets were able to attribute the start of their bullying to a specific incident or event. The theme contains the subthemes of *conflict* and *debility*. These

subthemes group the specific triggers that targets provided to explain how their bullying started. A discussion of examples of the different types of event in each subtheme follows.

### **5.3.1. Conflict**

The first subtheme of conflict was used to group the majority of the examples of triggers ( $n = 28$ ). Conflict happened in different directions, upwards with managers, sideways with colleagues, and downwards with subordinates. The majority of the findings in this subtheme relate to targets' disagreements with their managers ( $n = 17$ ), whilst some relate to disputes with colleagues ( $n = 7$ ), and finally, a few were linked to unpopular decisions made by managers that acted as a catalyst for the start of upward bullying against the same manager ( $n = 4$ ). Although some of the examples in this subtheme may appear to overlap with those in the subtheme of standing up, interviewees were specific about which conflicts started their time as targets. Interviewees identified triggers retrospectively to explain how the process of bullying began. Triggers marked the start of persistent, focused, negative behaviour from the perpetrator that was in different to that previously used. The following examples show ways in which conflicts triggered bullying.

Lucinda worked as an HR administrator and she thought she had a good relationship with her manager. Although she knew that her colleague had had difficulties with their manager, Lucinda had not noticed any problems. This situation changed when she had a public disagreement with her manager, she explained: "I had actually challenged her on a point of law regarding HR, very strongly disagreed with her, and was quite open about that". After the initial conflict, Lucinda said her manager undermined her at every opportunity, causing her considerable distress, and their relationship never recovered.

For some targets, an uncomfortable relationship can finally descend into bullying, for example, Isabella said she had had a strained relationship with her Head of School for several years after she had made a complaint about his behaviour towards her. The situation deteriorated when Isabella refused to accept, what she saw as, an arbitrarily imposed major change in her working conditions. She explained that her manager started a campaign of negative behaviour towards her, and she remarked, "It was do it or don't, and so I chose not to and the Head of

School has been very angry and chooses to bully me in lots of ways”. Following the triggering conflict, Isabella said her manager ignored her, overloaded her with demeaning tasks, and overlooked her for promotion.

Although most conflicts in this subtheme were downward, that is from managers to subordinates, managers also reported becoming targets. For example, Ava said her promotion to a management position had been going well until she made an unpopular decision. She explained what happened as follows: “The day I said ‘no’ to something, when I thought ‘No, we shouldn't be spending our money on this we should be putting our resources elsewhere’, I bought a fight and that fight was well and truly orchestrated”. Ava found herself challenged and undermined by a group of staff who tried to prevent her from doing her job. Two other managers reported upward bullying when they began to manage underperforming staff members. For example, manager Perry described his experience thus: “I was starting to put a difficult team leader through performance management and that made life a whole heap worse”. He found himself the subject of numerous trivial complaints from the team leader and her colleagues. For Perry this signalled the beginning of an aggressive bullying campaign against him and the end for his career at this ITP.

Similarly, colleagues can bully someone on a similar level in the organisational hierarchy following a conflict. A minor disagreement with an academic colleague heralded the start of bullying for Felix, who commented: “When I kind of said ‘no [I cannot help with your projects] that's not me, sorry’, she started behaving differently towards me”. Although initially his conflict was with one colleague, Felix soon noticed that other academics in his area were undermining and ridiculing him too.

### **5.3.2. Debility**

The second subtheme is debility. Debility is weakness or infirmity in the target. In this subtheme, targets referred to accidents that caused them to be temporarily absent from work and resulted in them needing additional support on their return, although none were permanently affected by their injuries. Three interviewees attributed their bullying to their debilitated state. All three worked at the same institute but different perpetrators bullied them. Each person said that their bullying had started shortly after an accident, and they all considered their

temporary vulnerability to have given their managers an opportunity to mistreat them. For example, Malcolm's department was in the process of restructuring. He had been having discussions with his manager about changes to his role, but the manager's attitude altered when Malcolm injured himself at work, Malcolm remarked "After the accident I was an easy target [for removal]". Malcolm believed that his manager lied to him and he said he felt harassed by HR staff who he thought should have been supporting his recovery. He explained that he felt forced to leave his job through bullying.

Injuries acquired outside the workplace also acted as triggers. For example, Cindy's temporary disability marked the start of a campaign to make her leave her job, she explained:

*I had a road accident and nearly croaked [died], but managed to survive. [After that] it was almost like I stood out as the weak link in the department. [The manager] and I weren't best buddies before it all happened anyhow, but it just got so much worse.*

Cindy said that her manager used a number of tactics to make her life difficult, including giving her physically impossible tasks and telling her to resign. Similar to Malcolm's experience, Cindy also reported that HR staff did not support her and behaved in ways that slowed her recovery.

### ***Discussion***

Key events seen as triggering, or initiating, the bullying process related to the themes of (1) conflict, such as an argument or difference of opinion, or (2) debility, where the target became a burden on the organisation as a result of an accident (although it seems possible that an illness could be treated in the same way).

The conflict subtheme indicates that disagreements or behaviours that create disapproval in potential perpetrators can serve as a trigger that starts the process of workplace bullying. This subtheme is important because workers in ITPs are very reliant on communication and negotiation. Work often requires professional judgement, for example, with student assessment and allocation of scarce resources, so disagreements and differences of opinion are a normal part of daily work life. Although differentiating between triggers and negative, or

abusive, behaviours may appear difficult, targets were specific about the events that started the process for them. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that a conflict over work is sufficient for bullying to start (Leymann, 1990; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003).

In the second subtheme, debility, interviewees who were temporarily incapacitated and needed extra support in the workplace became targets of bullying. Existing research shows that perpetrators choose to bully people who are viewed as being different (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Leymann, 1990) or need extra support (Salin, 2003a). Debility may be a form of difference, so again the findings are consistent with this research.

In conclusion, this section reviewed examples of the events that interviewees said provided the triggers for the onset of workplace bullying. These subthemes are consistent with existing literature. Together with precipitating structures and target selection, the trigger theme helps clarify the nature of the initial process that leads to the onset of bullying.

Once triggered, bullying begins in earnest and the perpetrator subjects the target to repeated abusive acts. Therefore, the theme of abusive behaviours is the focus of the next section.

## **5.4. Abusive behaviours**

The theme of abusive behaviours contains the persistent actions that interviewees said contributed to them feeling bullied. Keashly (2001) provided examples of a range of abusive behaviours (see table 1, section 2.1.1.), so the title of this theme has been adopted from her work. Although abusive behaviours might happen occasionally and not lead to bullying, when receivers experience such behaviours persistently, they are more likely to feel bullied (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Potential types of abusive behaviour may range from aggression, threats, and ostracism, through to inequitable treatment and unreasonable workloads (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Field, 1996; Keashly, 1998; Lee, 2000; Namie & Namie, 2000). The Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) contains a broad range of abusive behaviour items that are associated with personal derogation, work related harassment, and social exclusion (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). Although surveys, such as the NAQ, provide some helpful pointers to potential types of behaviour,

categories may be treated as flexible, so that any type of behaviour that makes a person feel bullied may be classified as abusive (Tracy et al., 2006).

Interviewees in this study gave a variety of examples of abusive behaviours to support their perception of being a target of bullying. As I grouped similar examples, the subthemes of *aggression*, *unfair work conditions*, *dishonesty*, and *ostracism* emerged from the data. Within the subthemes, the abusive behaviours are further grouped into varieties of similar behaviours. The following sections contain a discussion of the different varieties of experience in each subtheme.

### **5.4.1. Aggression**

The first subtheme, aggression, comprised the majority of examples of abusive behaviour. Aggression is an unprovoked attack on a person or group of people. Interviewees reported that aggression occurred in all three directions. The greatest use was in cases of downward, manager to subordinate, bullying. Interviewees described three varieties of aggression: (1) *verbal (spoken) aggression*, (2) *written aggression*, and (3) *non-verbal aggression*.

#### **5.4.1.1. Verbal aggression**

Verbal aggression is associated with negative interpersonal interactions, in the form of unpleasant comments and loud behaviour that perpetrators directed at targets. Verbal aggression was by far the most prominent variety of abusive behaviour reported within this subtheme, with 26 interviewees saying that they had experienced at least one form. Verbal aggression included the following varieties: *shouting and personal attacks*, *threats*, and *jokes and teasing*.

##### **5.4.1.1.1. Shouting and personal attacks**

Shouting and personal attacks were reported by the majority of interviewees ( $n = 26$ ) and the examples show how these actions can be used in different ways. For example, manager Ngaire said her dean's outbursts at meetings were a regular event that caused her to be fearful, she explained: "He just went absolutely off his head, started going all red in his face and started shouting and screaming and making all sorts of accusations".

Personal contact was not always necessary for shouting and personal attacks to occur. For example, academic Olga's manager used verbal aggression in

different ways, she explained: “She called me twice on my mobile and left abusive messages. [Another time] she was shouting in public; I was told that I was incompetent [and] that I was dishonest”. Some interviewees said that colleagues used shouting and personal attacks as bullying tactics too, although it was reported less frequently ( $n = 8$ ). For example, Ethan said he was stunned when his new colleague began to abuse him verbally in their office, and he described the situation thus: “He suddenly viciously attacked me and said I was not qualified to be in this job.... He was wrong, but he didn’t know”. Shouting and outbursts occurred frequently and were easily recognised forms of verbal aggression, but they were not the only type reported.

#### *5.4.1.1.2. Threats*

Threats of negative action were another specific form of verbal aggression that caused interviewees to feel that they were targets of bullying. Interviewees talked about receiving threats of disciplinary action and job losses or redundancies ( $n = 5$ ) from their managers. For example, Perry noticed that his conversations with his CEO often had an unpleasant element to them, he remarked:

*There were these sort of sly comments leading into, “Look, I don't think you're very effective” and alluding to “You're not the type of person I want in the organisation”, then leading up to “I think I'll get rid of you” type statements.*

For Perry the content and regularity of these conversations was very disturbing. Similarly, when Gerry became a union representative he felt threatened by his manager’s comments, and said, “Several times for about a month, he’d said ‘Be careful what you say, I’ll be watching you’ and I would think ‘holy crap’”. Although the comments from Gerry’s manager were general, they were sufficient for Gerry to feel threatened when placed in the wider context of a work environment where job cuts were expected.

#### *5.4.1.1.3 Jokes and teasing*

Jokes and teasing were the final form of verbal aggression reported. Although not a frequent occurrence, two interviewees said they were often subjected to jokes and teasing of a personal nature as part of a broader campaign of bullying. In the

first case, colleagues used teasing as a form of mobbing, whilst in the second case a manager used jokes with a subordinate. To illustrate, Ethan explained how his colleagues' behaviour left him feeling disturbed; stating:

*Those two were always making jokes about me. If we'd go off to a café, I'd order tea, and their standard line was "Oh, only gays drink tea"; there was this continual thing with these jokes, which were geared on my sexuality.*

Ethan said he was not gay, so initially his colleagues' behaviour confused him, and subsequently, he found it undermining. He said he was concerned that if he complained his co-workers might view him as humourless and increase the amount of teasing.

In the second example, accountant Queenie found her manager's constant references to her Arab ancestry wore her down, she explained: "[He said] how many camels do you have? Did you used to live in tents? Well I thought he was joking, but it was a bit too much of a joke. You know, he started mentioning it every time [I saw him]." Queenie said that the persistence of the behaviour, combined with the manager's general incivility, resulted in her feeling abused. Although jokes may appear trivial, scholars have recognised their abusive potential, and consequently they appear in the first stage of discrimination in Allport's Scale of Prejudice (1954, 1979). Therefore, it is unsurprising that targets reported jokes and teasing as a form of abusive behaviour. Furthermore, the NAQ has an item related to jokes, which emphasises their potential for negative use. In summary, the most prominent variety of aggression was verbal and this included shouting, personal attacks, threats, and jokes and teasing.

#### **5.4.1.2. Written aggression**

The remaining varieties of aggression, written and non-verbal, were reported by equal numbers of interviewees ( $n = 6$ ). Targets provided examples of perpetrators using written aggression in two different ways. Four of the examples involved aggressive messages being sent in emails and two involved aggressive letters. Perpetrators used these messages in all directions. For example, Lucinda said her manager regularly berated staff by email, she explained: "It was repetitive and it was constant to the point where we'd be cringing, if we got an e-mail from her".

The ease with which email is used can make it a powerful tool. For example, manager Rona reported that her disagreement with a senior manager quickly escalated when he used email, she commented: “He was attacking me and I knew he was blind copying everybody, because everybody would e-mail me and say, ‘Look what I’ve got’”. Rona said she felt humiliated by her manager’s behaviour. Colleagues sometimes used email to bully each other, as explained by Ethan: “People would send an e-mail about me, and they’d cc it to everyone. This guy was sending me e-mails, saying that I’d left equipment in my car; of course that was against the rules, and it was untrue”. Finally, Sophia, a manager, reported that junior staff used email messages as part of an upward campaign against her. She explained that the group were “Bombarding me with nitpicky e-mails about things that my area was doing wrong”. Sophia said that investigating and replying to the messages was very time consuming and caused her distress. These examples show how targets experienced aggressive written messages as a variety of bullying.

#### ***5.4.1.3. Non-verbal aggression***

The third and final variety in this subtheme is non-verbal aggression ( $n = 6$ ), which manifested itself in body language. Targets reported that the majority of non-verbal aggression was downwards, from managers towards subordinates but colleagues also used it horizontally. For example, Ken described his manager’s behaviour thus:

*He used very threatening body language, and proximity, and waving fingers, that sort of thing. His body language was very demeaning. He insisted on closed doors, small room, proxemic<sup>5</sup>-type power games; he seemed to know how to make people feel small and stupid.*

Another interviewee reported that both her manager and her colleague were non-verbally aggressive towards her. Administrator Tiffany described her colleague behaviour:

*He clenched his fists and leaned towards me; body language and the tone got louder each time, and the visits were repeated, the volume*

---

<sup>5</sup> Associated with spatial issues and physical distances between people, for example, standing so close to a person that the other person feels uncomfortable

*was going up, fists clenched tighter and tighter, and he was just demonstrating huge aggressiveness towards me.*

When Tiffany complained about the colleague's aggression, she said her manager's response shocked her, "The boss stood over me with clenched fists shaking his finger". Tiffany began to cry as she recounted her experiences to me and she was clearly still very upset by what had happened. Reports of non-verbal aggressiveness were relatively rare but powerful. The interviewees said this type of behaviour had a lasting impact on them and this showed when they related their stories.

To summarise, examples of verbal (spoken), written, and non-verbal aggression varieties appeared in the first subtheme of aggression. Aggressive acts were the most prominent types of behaviour reported by interviewees, and they reported verbal aggression most frequently.

#### **5.4.2. Unfair work conditions**

The second subtheme of abusive behaviour is unfair work conditions. In this subtheme, interviewees said perpetrators subjected them to a variety of forms of burdensome working conditions, including denying reasonable requests, denying employment rights, and treating them inequitably. All of the findings in this section relate to downward bullying, that is, by managers or supervisors towards subordinates ( $n = 19$ ).

##### **5.4.2.1. Denial of reasonable requests**

Some targets reported that perpetrators denied them access to the resources they needed to do their jobs. Denny provided an example of this behaviour when she tried to acquire essential teaching resources from her manager, she explained: "He said 'I am the person to ask but the answer is no' and he hadn't even heard the supporting evidence". Perry also explained that his CEO denied him funding to repair a computer lab, and he said he was told "There's no budget just do it", despite the task being impossible without suitable resources. Preventing access to resources made targets' work unnecessarily difficult and consequently they viewed this as a form of bullying.

Olga provided a different example of a reasonable request being denied. She explained that she had received an invitation to work on an overseas project

that would benefit her school but her manager objected; Olga remarked, “How many people go to Nauru? I knew she was going to say no to this, because she can”. Olga said her manager would prevent her taking trips for work, for example to present her research at conferences, but the manager frequently went overseas herself with no obvious benefit to the school. Olga felt that her manager deliberately set out to block her development by refusing access to resources and she considered this behaviour to be part of the manager’s bullying campaign against her. These examples show how being refused requests, apparently without good reason, can lead to people feeling bullied.

#### ***5.4.2.2. Denial of employment rights***

Other interviewees spoke of managers denying or withholding their employment rights. This behaviour resulted in unfair treatment and was seen as a form of bullying. For example, academic Uma said she found herself under pressure to return to work before she had recovered from a car accident, she said, “They were hounding me and then they wanted me in for duties. Even though I had medical certificates, they were still trying to get me to come in”. Uma thought her manager was taking advantage of her weakened state to try to deny her right to take sick leave.

A different example of the denial of employment rights came from academic Wiremu, who explained: “With no warning, my Programme Manager role was stripped by the acting Head of School; it was taken off me and one or two others publicly, announced to the staff meeting”. Wiremu said he was shocked and upset, so he asked for an explanation from his manager but it was not forthcoming. In this case, Wiremu said felt he had the right to hear of the change in responsibilities in private and to get an explanation for why it was happening. He said that the reduction in responsibilities did not have an impact on his salary, but the unorthodox implementation of the changes and the loss of an enjoyable part of his job were distressing for him. In both examples, managers treated targets in ways that undermined their employment rights.

#### ***5.4.2.3. Inequitable treatment***

Some interviewees talked about feeling bullied because perpetrators treated them less favourably compared to their colleagues. For example, manager Xanthe spoke

of the way her dean allowed one of Xanthe's colleagues to move directly into a newly created role, whilst Xanthe was required to work through layers of bureaucracy when she wanted to do something similar, she explained: "Once again I'd been muggins [treated as foolish] on this. I got put through this incredibly scrupulous process". Xanthe said that her dean openly treated staff members differently, and she received strict treatment because she was not one of the dean's favourites.

Some interviewees spoke of their perpetrators requiring them to carry out unreasonable amounts of work compared to their colleagues, or having to teach subjects that were outside their areas of expertise. For example, Cindy said, "Nobody else had a timetable that looked like mine and try teaching beginners 36 weeks 22 hours per week. You almost go gaga by the end of it". Cindy thought her manager had a plan to de-skill her by making her undertake repetitive, low level work, and ultimately to make her leave the organisation.

In contrast, the frequent changes to Isabella's schedule meant she was busier than her colleagues were, she explained:

*I have a very high teaching load compared to other people. Like 22 to 24 hours a week, week in week out. I don't get my timetable or subjects until the week before I start, and I am being put constantly into new areas.*

Isabella said that the frequent changes made it difficult for her to prepare stimulating classes and she relied on the goodwill of her colleagues to enable her to accomplish her workload.

In summary, in the second subtheme of unfair work conditions, a variety of examples illustrated the ways in which denial of requests, denial of rights, and inequitable treatment occurred. Interviewees talked about the ways in which perpetrators treated them unfairly compared to their colleagues and made them feel like they were targets of bullying. Sometimes targets had not labelled the unfairness as bullying until they considered the behaviour in context with other abusive behaviours they had experienced. Ultimately, targets viewed unfair treatment as part of an ongoing pattern of abusive behaviour that made them feel bullied.

### **5.4.3. Dishonesty**

The third subtheme is dishonesty. Interviewees talked about the ways in which dishonest behaviour from a perpetrator had made them feel that they were targets of bullying. As with other subthemes, this one manifested itself in a variety of ways. Most interviewees talked of being told lies or having lies told about them ( $n = 7$ ), whilst two others spoke of having credit for their work stolen. Perpetrators used dishonest behaviour in all directions.

#### **5.4.3.1. Lies**

Sometimes perpetrators lied directly to targets. For example, Ethan said his manager told him that the HR department had a record of all the mistakes he had made at work. When he gained access to the files he was surprised by their contents, Ethan remarked, “So I went in [and saw my file] and there was nothing on me; it was just a fabrication, it was just a lie”. Ethan said had been very worried about what he would find and he was at a loss to understand why his manager misled him in this way.

Sometimes perpetrators used lies to undermine targets indirectly. Cindy provided an example of this form of dishonesty. She described how her manager told her colleagues that Cindy could only teach in lower level classes because students and staff had complained about her. When Cindy tried to get more information about the allegations, she found nothing existed to support her manager’s claims and she commented, “There are no concrete facts; there are no reports, there are no complaints”. Cindy she felt that her manager was being dishonest in order to undermine her.

Dishonesty sometimes involved being set up to fail by perpetrators. To illustrate, Rona said her manager had put her name on a document without Rona’s knowledge then required her to take responsibility for the contents; she explained: “Basically it said I had written it but I’d never seen it before.” Rona went on to explain that her manager was causing her other problems: “I was starting to get blamed for a lot of things, and [the manager] was going to [the dean] saying I’d said this and I’d done that when I hadn’t”. It appeared that Rona’s manager was undermining Rona by talking about her to other people without giving her the opportunity to respond or defend herself.

#### **5.4.3.2. Stealing credit**

Two interviewees talked of their managers stealing credit for their work. For example, Perry explained that he had initiated a high profile project before the arrival of his new CEO but instead of being lauded for his achievement, he found his CEO took the limelight: “He was not wanting to recognise the efforts of others and positioned himself to take a lot of the glory”. Perry saw the denial of credit for his work as part of a wider initiative to undermine him and force him to leave the organisation.

Olga described a different form of theft. She explained that her manager had asked her for programme documentation on a legitimate pretext, so she was taken-aback when she found a private institution was using her work. Olga explained the situation: “She [the manager] stole [my course] and she gave it word for word to them”. For Olga this was another indication of how her manager did not treat her appropriately and the denial of the authorship of her work left her feeling undervalued.

In summary, in the third subtheme, interviewees provided examples of dishonest behaviours and that made them feel bullied. As with previous sections, targets’ examples fitted into a broader pattern of abusive behaviour that they saw as bullying.

#### **5.4.4. Ostracism**

The fourth and final subtheme of abusive behaviour is ostracism. This is the exclusion of a person from a social environment or work group. It occurs when perpetrators systematically, or repeatedly, ignore and shun targets, or leave them out of conversations or events. Eight interviewees referred to experiences of ostracism. Ostracism was used in downward bullying ( $n = 6$ ), and horizontal bullying ( $n = 2$ ) but not in upward bullying. For example, when Rona accepted a secondment her temporary manager excluded her, she explained: “She wouldn’t talk to me. She’d walk in and say hello to everyone else and not say a word to me”. Rona thought her manager wanted her to leave the position because Rona was not a member of the manager’s church and the manager wanted to offer the post to a friend.

Sometimes ostracism appears as part of a broader bullying campaign. For example, Ava explained that once she and her immediate team had become targets

of a manager's bullying, their colleagues ostracised them, she said, "We were shunned, we were isolated, no-one would speak to us". The removal of support and collegial relationships compounded Ava's difficulties with her manager.

Targets explained that perpetrators sometimes used ostracism in a covert fashion, for example ignoring them in private but acting normally in public. This approach made it hard for targets to show, or prove, that the perpetrator was mistreating them. Although ostracism in may appear to be innocuous, interviewees said it caused them considerable distress. Research has suggested that being ignored can cause feelings that are similar to physical pain (Williams, 2001, 2008), so the interviewees' inclusion of this behaviour as a form of bullying is understandable.

### *Discussion*

Targets reported a broad range of abusive behaviours that merged into four subthemes and a several varieties. The subthemes are (1) aggression, (2) unfair work conditions, (3) dishonesty, and (4) ostracism. Within these subthemes, the varieties of behaviours were verbal, written, and non-verbal aggression, denial of reasonable requests, denial of employment rights, and being treated inequitably, being told lies, and having credit stolen. The targets all gave multiple examples of different negative behaviours. The subtheme of aggression was most prominent and the majority of targets experienced shouting and personal (verbal) attacks in addition to other forms of abuse described in the subthemes.

The majority of behaviours in these subthemes fit into the summary of bullying behaviour produced by Keashly (1998) shown in table 1. For example, targets' accounts of perpetrators using verbal aggression, lying to them, and subjecting them to derogatory jokes and teasing equate to the verbal, active, direct behaviours proposed by Keashly. Targets' accounts of work overload (inequitable treatment) and theft of materials or credit are forms of physical, active, indirect behaviours. Whilst being subject to false accusations and rumours fit with verbal, active, indirect behaviours. Finally, being ignored and excluded, as in the ostracism subtheme, were forms of verbal, passive, direct behaviours. One variety of aggression, written (i.e., using emails and letters), was not included in Keashly's list. However, overall the subthemes are consistent with the types of bullying behaviour noted by Keashly (1998).

#### **5.4.5. Abusive behaviours and the Negative Acts Questionnaire**

To synthesise the qualitative and quantitative findings, I compared the emergent abusive behaviours subthemes with the results of the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ). A summary of the similarities appears in table 15. Starting from the left side, the first column shows the themes and subthemes identified in the thematic analysis of the interviews, the next column shows the number of interviewees that contributed to these themes, followed by the associated NAQ item, and finally the percentage of survey respondents that reported experiencing that item in the last six months.

Data in table 15 shows the ways in which the subthemes and NAQ items align. The subthemes were similar to 27 of the 29 NAQ items. Thirteen items aligned with the aggression subtheme, 12 with unfair work conditions, and 3 with ostracism. However, one subtheme (dishonesty, including the varieties of lies and stealing credit) and one variety (denial of reasonable requests) did not have a related NAQ item, whilst one item (18) did not emerge from the subthemes.

Although verbal aggression featured prominently in the interviewees' accounts of abusive behaviour, in the NAQ these eleven items had a mean score of 36.6%, or below the overall mean of 40.2% for the 29 items. The highest frequency in the items that aligned with verbal aggression was 52.3% (item 6), which is somewhat lower than the item with the highest frequency (item 16, 82.1%). Variations of verbal aggression feature prominently in both the interview accounts and the NAQ, despite not being the most frequent form of negative act. One item, involving practical jokes had the second lowest score (9.3) and did not align with any of the subthemes, suggesting the item is of relatively minimal importance in this respondent sample. Finally, the subtheme of dishonesty, and its associated varieties, plus the variety of "Being denied reasonable requests" did not align with any of the NAQ items.

Table 15

*Abusive Behaviour Subthemes Compared to NAQ Items* (continues on next page)

Abusive behaviour subthemes and varieties	Interviewee frequency	NAQ Items	NAQ Total %
<u>Aggression</u>			
Verbal	<i>n</i> = 26	3. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	51.7
		2. Receiving unwanted sexual attention	17.9
		6. Being the subject of gossip or rumours	52.3
		8. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), or private life	41.1
		9. Being shouted at or being the target for spontaneous anger or rage	40.4
		11. Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job	33.7
		12. Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse	6
		13. Being given repeated reminders of errors or mistakes	45.7
		15. Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort	41
		23. Receiving offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity	15.2
		25. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	20.5
Written/verbal	<i>n</i> = 6	17. Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or emails	29.1
Non-verbal	<i>n</i> = 5	10. Receiving intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, shoving, blocking/barring the way	25.2
<u>Unfair work conditions</u>			
Denial of employment rights	<i>n</i> = 12	19. Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description	41.7
		21. Having unfair allegations made against you	40.4

Abusive behaviour subthemes and varieties	Interviewee frequency	NAQ Items	NAQ Total %
			34.4
Inequitable treatment	<i>n</i> = 7	24. Being pressured to not claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, travel expenses)	18.5
		29. Being moved or transferred against your will	78.8
		1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance	61.6
		4. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	49
		5. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks	58.9
		20. Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	38.3
		22. Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work	19.2
		26. Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed)	45.7
Denial of reasonable requests	<i>n</i> = 3	N/A	62.9
Ostracism	<i>n</i> = 6	7. Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.	60.3
		14. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people	44.3
		16. Having your opinions and views ignored	82.1
<u>Dishonesty</u>			
Lies	<i>n</i> = 7	N/A	0
Stealing credit	<i>n</i> = 2	N/A	0
N/A	<i>n</i> = 0	18. Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you do not get on with	9.3

## *Discussion*

A range of abusive behaviours emerged from the interviews and these were grouped into four subthemes. The majority of behaviours in the subthemes aligned with items in the NAQ.

A comparison of the abusive behaviour subtheme, and its associated varieties, with the NAQ items found that the majority of findings aligned. However, one item (practical jokes) and three subtheme varieties (denial of reasonable requests, lies, and stealing credit) did not align. The absence of NAQ items associated with the subthemes of dishonesty and the denial of reasonable requests may highlight a limitation of the NAQ items, at least in the context of the present study. However, the reports of similar behaviours in two separate and quite different sets of data indicate that targets are reasonably consistent in which behaviours they consider to be bullying.

Making a direct comparison of the results of the interviews and NAQ is difficult because the analysis of the separate data sets has been quite different. Also, the groups contained different people referring to different experiences. However, the most likely reason for the difference in response levels is methodological. That is, in one case (the NAQ), respondents were provided with a list and asked if negative behaviours ever happened. People indicated whether they had experienced the behaviours, but they did not indicate prominence or personal significance. In the interviews, people told their stories and they only tended to mention those behaviours that were prominent, not all possible behaviours. However, the strong overlap does provide additional support that the NAQ measure appears to be a strong and valid construct which incorporates a generally wide range of bullying behaviours.

Finally, the NAQ contains items related to sexual and racial harassment, and violence. None of the interviewees referred to such behaviours in these terms, although certain behaviours, for example Queenie's teasing about camels, and the gay taunts directed at Ethan, might well fit into the items; however, both interviewees provided these examples, along with other examples of non-racial or non-sexual negative behaviours, as part of the general pattern of bullying. Only a relatively small number of respondents (mean = 12.1%) selected the sexual and racial items in the survey. As discussed in section 2.1.2., sexual and racial

harassment, and violence are recognised constructs, and typically these are treated as distinct forms of harassment. Therefore, the availability of other avenues for addressing such difficulties might explain the lower frequencies and absence of specific interview references to these behaviours.

One form of abusive behaviour that did not emerge was progressive discipline. This omission is noteworthy in light of its prominence in Lutgen-Sandvik's (2003) process model. This finding is discussed in more detail in section 5.9.

To manage the broad range of negative behaviours, targets had several resistance strategies available to them; however, constraints limited their choices. The next section reviews the factors targets' perceived as limiting their resistance options.

## **5.5. Constraints**

The theme of constraints comprises the personal and structural factors that influenced how targets responded to bullying. Constraints are antecedent to resisting, or coping, with abuse. Constraints comprised interviewees' reasons for their resistance choices, for example, deciding to avoid perpetrators rather than resisting actively by making a formal complaint. Just under half of the interviewees ( $n = 15$ ) reported that they felt sufficiently constrained by their circumstances to be unable to take actions to manage their treatment, either as a first response to the abusive behaviour or following failed attempts to manage it using complaints or other forms of active resistance (types of resistance are discussed in section 5.6). The findings in this section are grouped in the subthemes of *cash*, *commitment*, and *concern*. Sometimes interviewees gave multiple reasons for their chosen approaches, and so some examples appear in more than one subtheme.

### **5.5.1. Cash**

In the first subtheme of cash, interviewees talked about the financial risk of losing or changing their job ( $n = 9$ ). Work in the higher education sector in New Zealand is relatively well paid and several of the respondents believed that if they left the sector they would not be able to gain equivalent remuneration in a different job. For example, despite being well qualified, Tiffany found that the alternatives were

unattractive, she remarked, “Any other job that I take is about \$10,000 less and a long way out of town”. Similarly, Ethan felt it would be too risky to make a formal complaint about the behaviour of his colleague, he explained, “I’d just bought this damn house, so I was committed. I was a mortgage-slave; I couldn’t afford to lose”. Both Tiffany and Ethan chose to withdraw from interaction with work colleagues rather than risk a confrontation.

The relatively comfortable work conditions in the sector sometimes led to an uneasy complacency, as Wiremu explains:

*I used to sort of think “I’m not taking any more of this crap” and then I thought, “Oh well the money’s not bad, I get a lot of holidays. I’ll just hang on another few weeks until the next holiday.”*

Overall, financial considerations and work conditions played an important role in many interviewees’ decisions not to leave their jobs when they felt bullied. However, other constraints also limited their response choices.

### **5.5.2. Commitment**

The second subtheme of commitment comprises interviewees’ comments about their sense of purpose in relation to their job ( $n = 4$ ). The findings suggest that commitment constrained interviewees’ responses to bullying. Often commitment stemmed from a love of the students and/or the work itself. For example, when a new line manager used aggressive behaviour with Denny, she decided to ignore it, even though she said was very upset. Denny rationalised her response to the situation as follows:

*I won’t go because I love what I am doing with my students too much and I will not leave. If I did not love my students, I would walk, but I can see what I do is really valuable.*

Commitment to students was also a factor in Uma’s decision to continue in her job, she said:

*I had a lot of the students saying, “You can’t leave” because I must have inadvertently sent vibes that I was ready to pack it in. ... I didn’t*

*want to let the students down. [I thought] “No, I’ve just got to keep going.”*

Ngaire also put students’ needs before her own, but she supplied a different perspective. When her manager threatened her, Ngaire chose not to take formal action against him, she explained, “I just didn’t want to take it further. I thought that the institution really needed to spend money on students, not on staff PGs [Personal Grievances].” As a manager, Ngaire was acutely aware of the financial position of the organisation. Despite suffering from serious mistreatment, she chose to take an altruistic approach and maintained her commitment to, what she saw as, the purpose of the organisation.

### **5.5.3. Concern**

The third and final subtheme is concern. This subtheme focuses on targets’ concerns about the potential risks, negative consequences, and fear of engaging in formal complaints processes ( $n = 4$ ). For example, apprehension about the way in which a formal complaint might affect her opportunities for future employment deterred academic Zoe from taking action, she stated, “PGs aren’t really a good idea, I think, especially in New Zealand. The country is too small and you’re tainted forever”. Similarly, concern about the process, and the potential imbalance of power between her and the perpetrator, also played a part in Ngaire’s decision not to make a formal complaint; she explained, “I suppose I was scared about the outcome too, you know. What would happen if he managed to turn full circle somehow?” Therefore, targets’ concerns limited their perceived opportunities for formal action.

### **Discussion**

Targets considered their options for managing perpetrators and continuing to do their jobs. Their responses were constrained by (1) their need for an income, (2) their commitment to students, and (3) their concern about the outcome of the complaints process. These subthemes provided explanations for the limited options targets felt they had for resolving their difficulties.

The subtheme of cash was the most prominent, as targets expressed their concern about being able to cope financially if they lost their jobs. Existing research into workplace bullying suggests that financial considerations play an

important part in a target's decision-making (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994), so this finding is to be expected.

The subtheme of commitment provided a different perspective. In existing literature, scholars proposed strong commitment to a job as a rationale for why perpetrators select targets for bullying (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Davenport et al., 1999; Lewis, 2006). However in this study, commitment provided a reason for choosing to find ways to ignore conflict and continue to work. This altruism was surprising given the difficulties that bullying presented for targets. Targets maintained their commitment to students, and the general purpose of organisations, despite negative their experiences affecting them badly. Only female interviewees made comments that fitted this subtheme and this observation is interesting because other subthemes tended not to be gender-specific. It appears that the service or helping and nurturing aspects of the professions in ITPs may have encouraged some interviewees to put the students' needs before their own. Therefore, the findings in the subtheme of commitment contribute to the literature by identifying why targets endure bullying without taking action to prevent it.

Finally, the subtheme of concern also identifies reasons for enduring bullying. It highlights the interviewees' lack of faith in the systems available for complaining about and rectifying bullying. This finding makes a contribution to the workplace bullying literature by highlighting the importance of having systems that employees feel will work for them and be taken seriously by the organisation.

In summary, the theme of constraints comprised interviewees' explanations of why they decided against taking formal action against perpetrators of bullying. The theme contains the subthemes of cash, commitment, and concern, and these subthemes were used to group the reasons that interviewees gave for their resistance choices. The next section discusses the theme of resistance and choices that targets made.

## **5.6. Resistance**

The theme of resistance comprises the coping strategies that people adopted in order to manage their experiences of abusive behaviour (Bies & Trip, 1998). As discussed in the previous section, interviewees felt their choices were constrained by the need for an income, their commitment to their students and the job itself,

and their concern about the possible outcome the complaints processes, so they selected resistance strategies that they felt best fitted their circumstances. All of the interviewees in the current study gave examples of the ways in which they resisted work place bullying. The subthemes of *active resistance*, *passive resistance*, and *paradoxical resistance* emerged from the thematic analysis. The majority of interviewees used a combination of active and passive resistance, whilst some also used paradoxical approaches. A discussion of the subthemes and examples follows.

### **5.6.1. Active resistance**

This subtheme comprises the direct or focused actions that interviewees said they took in an attempt to resolve their difficulties. Active resistance involves actions that are usually authorised by the organisation, such as using existing complaints processes (Ashforth & Mael, 1998) and tends to involve open, deliberate acts that require agency. The vast majority—29 out of 31 interviewees—reported examples of active resistance. The two people who completely avoided this approach said they did so out of a lack of trust in their ITP and its processes. Targets used active resistance to manage bullying from all directions. The majority of active resistance examples involved making complaints or threatening to do so, whilst a few interviewees said they confronted the perpetrator. A discussion of examples from each variety is below.

#### **5.6.1.1. Complaints**

A majority of interviewees ( $n = 22$ ) said they used different varieties of *complaints*, ranging from *personal grievances* (PGs), *threatening legal action*, and *internal complaints* to managers and HR staff, as ways to resist abusive behaviour. A review of the different approaches to making complaints follows.

##### **5.6.1.1.1. Personal Grievances**

Three interviewees said they used personal grievances (PGs) to complain about their treatment. A personal grievance is a legal action filed by an employee who believes an employer has treated him or her unfairly (Biz, 2010). Of the three PGs submitted, two targets won their cases, whilst the third was ongoing at the time of the interview. The PGs occurred when the targets and perpetrators had already ceased to work together, and they led to legal remedies, for example financial

compensation, rather than prevention. Ava, who had used her organisation's internal process to complain about her school's unfair restructuring, provided a particularly successful example. Although her organisation upheld her complaint and the perpetrator chose to leave the organisation voluntarily, Ava felt that merely returning to the status quo was insufficient, she explained:

*I got back everything I felt I was due [but] I believed I should have had an apology for what happened. That wasn't forthcoming, so I filed a personal grievance to the Employment Relations Authority, and at mediation, [my employer] capitulated completely.*

Ava received an apology in front of her colleagues in the school and financial compensation. Ava's experience is an unusual, but encouraging, example of active resistance that shows how formal processes may remedy workplace bullying. However, Ava recognised the importance of her expert knowledge of employment law in achieving this outcome and despite being successful she still found the process extremely stressful. No one else in this study received an apology, although one person received a compensation package for losing his job.

#### *5.6.1.1.2. Threatening legal action*

Taking a PG is a formal, legal process that usually happens when targets have exhausted other options. However, four targets reported that threatening to take legal action (i.e., a PG) was sufficient to make their managers improve matters without them having to carry out their threat. For example, Wiremu said his manager and supervisor had subjected him to a number of abusive behaviours, so he confronted the manager, Wiremu explained:

*We were having a good old go at each other and I said, "If these sorts of e-mails continue, I might consider a Personal Grievance case", and then the Head of School became very nice for the rest of the conversation.*

Wiremu said his manager adopted a friendly tone and started to make suggestions about how the problems with the supervisor might be addressed, which partially resolved the difficulties.

Even an indirect threat may be sufficient to gain some improvement. For example, when Rona's manager verbally abused her, she mentioned the problem to a friend of the manager; Rona explained, "I said [to the manager's friend], 'It's bullying, and so I have every right to take out a PG'". It transpired that the friend mentioned this to the manager. Rona continued her story, "The next morning [the manager] was really nice to me, and she was nice to me until my secondment finished". Consequently, a threat of a PG was sufficient to defuse this situation until Rona returned to her substantive position.

Defusing problems following threats of formal action suggests that, despite allowing the difficulties to occur, there is at least some awareness amongst ITP managers that abusive behaviours are unacceptable. In New Zealand, legal cases are likely to be time-consuming and expensive for organisations, so it is understandable that managers would wish to avoid them. Furthermore, a threat appears to bring formerly unacknowledged issues into focus, resolving some of the difficulty caused by invisibility (Gilbert & Malone, 1995), so this approach appears useful for targets. Finally, the legal threat associated with a PG increases the risk of career damage for perpetrators and managers, which may explain why this approach can be powerful at times.

#### *5.6.1.1.3 Internal complaints*

ITPs have internal complaints processes that allow employees to raise issues at work, without recourse to legal processes. Internal complaints processes range from informal, such as verbally raising an issue with a line-manager or HR to gain resolution for minor issues, through to formal, involving written complaints to a specific complaints officer, who may arrange investigations to seek resolution, sometimes with the aid of external mediation. Most interviewees who reported making complaints used an informal approach with their managers, HR staff, or internal union representatives. They reported varying degrees of success with these approaches. For example, after several meetings with his dean that left Ken feeling belittled and distressed, he decided to seek support. Ken explained his approach as follows: "I requested the help of the HR manager. After about three meetings over three months we managed to find some sort of workable solution". The HR manager implemented an interim arrangement to minimise contact

between Ken and his dean, which Ken said provided him with some respite until the dean left.

Unfortunately, not all meetings were productive. For example, after receiving abusive emails and telephone calls from her supervisor, administrator Belinda complained to her section manager. The manager organised a mediation meeting to discuss the issues, but this did not work out the way Belinda hoped, she explained: “[My supervisor] behaved so nicely and phrased her stuff so nicely because her manager was there.” Belinda said that she thought the dynamics of the meeting were not working for her, so she abandoned her complaint and used other forms of resistance.

Interviewees also reported that complaints could make matters worse. For example, Tiffany made a formal (i.e., written) complaint about her aggressive co-worker. At a mediation session arranged to resolve the issue, she explained the problems and the co-worker’s behaviour towards her improved. Subsequently, other colleagues started a whispering campaign and began to lobby Tiffany’s manager to have her removed from her position; Tiffany stated:

*I’m being punished for [making the complaint] in one way or another and relationships have changed. Before I had a reasonable relationship with the rest of the team [but now I don’t]. If I couldn’t have handled [the perpetrator], I should have just moved on.*

Tiffany said she received minimal support from her manager and she regretted using active resistance to manage her situation.

#### **5.6.1.2. Confrontation**

Finally in the subtheme of active resistance, some interviewees said they used *confrontation* ( $n = 9$ ). Confrontation took the form of speaking to the perpetrator directly or using humorous approaches. All of the examples tended to have an aggressive element to them and none of the targets provided examples of constructive confrontations. Confrontations are split into two varieties, *direct speaking* and *humour*.

#### *5.6.1.2.1. Direct speaking*

Direct speaking involved a direct verbal challenge to the perpetrator, either in private or in public. For example, Olga said her manager became angry with her when she refused additional duties that were outside her remit, ‘She said, ‘I’m going to have you on discipline charges’, and I said [sarcastically], ‘Well you knock yourself out’. It never happened and she didn’t do it”. Olga went on to explain that by verbally challenging her manager, she was able to gain some control of the situation. Similarly, Belinda talked about feeling bullied by a colleague’s frequent references to race, so she decided to do something about it; she explained:

*All I said at a meeting one day was, “I really wish you would stop judging people on the colour of their skin”, and I said it in a way that may have made her think that there was some Maori in my blood.*

Belinda said that after had created a doubt about her ethnicity in her colleague’s mind, she the abusive remarks ceased. However, the bullying did not end as the colleague continued to undermine her in other ways.

Finally, Queenie reported that swearing at her manager was effective; she explained: “He said, ‘Fuck you’ and I said, ‘Fuck you’ back. This is not a way to deal with matters, but it was the easiest thing to do”. Queenie found that her manager stopped swearing at her after her retort. She thought it might have been because swearing was completely out of character for her. However, he did continue to mistreat her in other ways, so the situation was not resolved but the type of abuse changed. All of the examples in this section are of aggressive exchanges and no one reported having a constructive, assertive conversation. In the next section, a target rationalised the lack of constructive approaches to managing bullying with perpetrators.

#### *5.6.1.2.2. Humour*

Targets reported that humour, in the form of teasing or jokes, was a helpful form of confrontation. For example, Rona said that her dean verbally abused all of her colleagues from time to time. When he tried to ridicule her in meetings, she turned it around and ridiculed him instead. Rona explained her approach: “He’d try to

make a joke about me and I'd just make a joke back saying, 'That's right, because you're an old man you have a small bladder, so we can't talk long', then he'd just leave me alone." Rona said this approach worked for her in this context. She went on to explain that she felt there was no point in attempting to deal with her manager in a rational way in meetings, because she had seen her colleagues try this and fail.

The examples of confrontations show how responding directly to the perpetrator was a useful type of resistance for some interviewees. Bullying is a socially unacceptable event that may be hard to manage by conventional means, such as reasoning. However, it appears that using socially unacceptable responses, for example, challenging, swearing, and ridicule, may be an effective means of temporarily redressing the power balance between the target and perpetrator. A possible reason for the effectiveness of direct approaches in reducing, but not stopping, abuse is that the element of surprise in them confuses the perpetrator and makes them more cautious in future interactions.

In summary, the first subtheme of active resistance comprised examples of the ways in which interviewees chose to deal with workplace bullying by performing actions that the perpetrator would know about. Interviewees said they used a range of complaints, including Personal Grievances (PGs), threats of PGs, and internal complaints processes. Finally, some said they confronted perpetrators and engaged with them verbally, either as confrontation or by using humour. Using active resistance resulted in a variety of outcomes for interviewees, in the most successful cases the abusive behaviour eased, whilst at the other extreme it was unsuccessful and the behaviour became much worse. Sometimes the threat of a formal complaint was sufficient to achieve an improvement in relationships, and although this approach did not resolve the problems, it did provide some respite. Confrontation in the forms of direct speaking and humour also appeared to be helpful for reducing the immediate impact of bullying; however, again these approaches were not sufficient alone to resolve it. Interviewees sometimes spoke of using more than one variety of active resistance. As discussed in the constraints section of this chapter, not everyone felt able or willing to resist bullying actively. The next subtheme discusses the experiences of those who used passive approaches.

## **5.6.2. Passive resistance**

The subtheme of passive resistance comprises another set of approaches that interviewees said they took to enable them to cope with the abusive behaviour they were experiencing. In contrast to the active resistance strategies discussed in the previous section, interviewees spoke of resisting in meaningful ways that enabled them to avoid coming to the attention of the perpetrator. The actions discussed in this section are part of a broad set of behaviours that interviewees said they used to help them cope with bullying and remain in their jobs. The varieties are titled (a) *support*, (b) *avoidance*, and (c) *deflection*.

Passive resistance manifested itself in a number of different forms. Many interviewees said that seeking or gaining external support from families and friends enabled them to manage their difficulties at work without drawing attention to themselves. Gaining support, allowed some interviewees to withdraw and pretend to be unaffected by abusive behaviour. Finally, a few targets chose to rationalise the behaviour of their perpetrator by framing it in terms of psychological illness. Importantly, most of the interviewees said they used passive forms of resistance after using active resistance unsuccessfully. For example, some interviewees said they had prior experiences of making complaints about other matters that left them without any faith in the systems that their organisations operated. All targets reported using some form of passive resistance. Some interviewees reported using passive resistance to manage bullying from more than one direction, hence the number of cases being greater than 31. A discussion of examples of each variety of passive resistance follows.

### **5.6.2.1. Support**

The majority of passive resistance examples involved gaining support from peers, friends and family ( $n = 17$ ). For example, Jessica's colleagues helped her to manage a co-worker's abusive behaviour, after she had told them of her difficulties, she stated, "What gets you through all of this is the support of colleagues; people will rally round; a bit like when you get divorced". Some interviewees remarked that peer support became particularly important because the pressure from the abuse made them question their own perceptions. For example, when Cindy was trying to resist her manager's abusive behaviour, she relied on her colleagues to confirm her perceptions; she explained:

*It was my peers that supported me; they were great. It was them that were standing by me [because] she made me paranoid, and I'd go, "Am I paranoid?" and they'd go "No, no you're not paranoid Cindy, because we can all see it".*

Similarly, Perry felt his manager was gradually pushing him out of the organisation. He explained how he relied on his peers to help him understand what was happening, "As life got more difficult I kept my work friends around me to get some support and comfort, and also check I was not losing my mind about all of this".

Families also featured in interviewees' comments about how they passively resisted abusive behaviour. For example, Lucinda said, "I have a very supportive, great husband and family. I would go home and vent and he'd be supportive". Similarly, Felix remarked, "My wife is very supportive. She didn't mind me coming home and whingeing". These examples indicate how seeking the support of peers, friends, and family helped interviewees to cope with, or resist, abuse at work.

#### **5.6.2.2. Avoidance**

The second variety of passive resistance, avoidance, involved eluding confrontation and ignoring difficulties ( $n = 13$ ). For example, Tiffany had complained about her colleague's behaviour and had been to mediation, but subsequently colleagues of the perpetrator began to mistreat her, so Tiffany decided there was little point in complaining again. She remarked, "I've just got to pretend that I have no idea what they're doing and just pull my head in". Similarly, Isabella said she decided to withdraw rather than complain, she explained:

*If you say you are suffering from stress, you get the message that you should get a different job.... I would never let them see the stress that all that workload puts on me....I chose not to be as visible, so, you know, you go into hibernation....you just have to learn to live with it.*

Some interviewees remarked that they refocused their efforts to reduce the impact of abusive behaviours. For example, Denny said she chose to put her

energy into her teaching rather than worry about her manager's abusive behaviour; she explained: "I get into my classroom with my students and I do what's best for them. I've been there long enough to know I can ignore 90% of the crap that comes down from above". Denny's positive reframing provided her with a sense of control and enabled her to continue to do her job.

Sometimes situations were such that ignoring them seemed the only option. For example, Uma explained that focusing on her students had resulted in her using passive resistance, she stated, "I didn't want to let the students down. I thought, 'No, I've just got to keep going' and I was way too busy to have the time to meet a lawyer". The examples in this section indicate some of the ways that interviewees passively resisted bullying by avoiding and ignoring problem situations.

### ***5.6.2.3. Deflection***

Finally, interviewees used deflection to divert blame for the bullying behaviour onto the mental health of their perpetrator (n = 10). For example, Olga rationalised the unprofessional behaviour of her manager by saying: "I think she is ill, I think she is psychotic at times, I think she is a psychopath, a sociological psychopath". Similarly, Tiffany said she was unable to understand why her colleague abused her, so she decided that he was having mental health problems, she explained: "I actually came to the conclusion in the end, in my opinion, he's unstable". Interviewees appeared to use their comments simply to rationalise the behaviour, rather than as an attempt to undermine the person concerned, and some interviewees, for example, Tiffany, appeared to be sympathetic towards her original perpetrator. By reframing the abusive behaviour as being outside the control of the perpetrator, interviewees were able to deflect and depersonalise the situation. This may also have improved targets' ability to cope by recasting the situation so that they were blameless, because the perpetrator was mentally ill, and thus the negative behaviour rested solely with the perpetrator and not any personal shortcomings of their own.

In summary, within the subtheme of passive resistance, three varieties emerged. Examples of support, avoidance, and deflection illustrated the passive approaches that interviewees said they used to cope with abusive behaviour and resist leaving the workplace. Passive resistance had varying degrees of

effectiveness and targets tended to use more than one variety. These passive approaches did not rectify the abusive situations but they sometimes provided sufficient respite for targets to replenish their coping resources. By seeking external or informal support, withdrawing, and reframing situations through deflection, interviewees reported that they were able to endure abusive behaviour more readily. When active and passive resistance proved ineffective, targets sometimes used paradoxical resistance, so the next section discusses this approach.

### **5.6.3. Paradoxical resistance**

The final resistance subtheme comprises forms of resistance that interviewees said they took, or would have liked to take, that observers might see as abusive, manipulative or difficult behaviour. Paradoxical resistance may be targeted, such as threats of violence, or diffuse like work-to-rule, but it usually involves actions that are unauthorised by the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1998). I chose the term paradoxical resistance for this subtheme to reflect the apparent absurdity of, for example, creating rumours to undermine a person, in order to stop the same person from bullying, or reducing work output to “get even” with an abusive manager. Paradoxical resistance is essentially acting in a way that the interviewees might consider to be bullying if someone used it against them, or actions that could provide support for a manager’s negative opinion of a target. The behaviours are also paradoxical in that they may reverse the relationship between the target and the perpetrator, as the perpetrator could claim abuse by the target. Paradoxical resistance had three varieties: (1) *work-to-rule*, (2) *undermining*, and (3) *threats of violence*. Targets used paradoxical resistance in cases of downward and horizontal bullying, but not in upward bullying.

#### **5.6.3.1. Work-to-rule**

The most frequently occurring form of paradoxical resistance related to work-to-rule. Interviewees talked about ways in which they modified their behaviour to reduce their effort at work ( $n = 7$ ). For example, Isabella said she had previously undertaken additional responsibilities and worked extra hours but she stopped doing this as a form of protest at her mistreatment, she stated:

*I handled it by not being so available and withdrawing just to a level of compliance. I never volunteer any more, I never give my opinion, but I do all the things that are necessary to be done [for my job].*

Similarly, Cindy said, she resisted her manager's abusive behaviour by not volunteering when her manager asked for help, she commented, "I give 120% for the students but when it comes to doing extra for the department I'm thinking you're not landing another bloody job on me". Cindy remarked that she used this approach was a form of revenge against her manager. Finally, Ethan provided a slightly different example. When he was leaving an organisation, following abuse by his manager, he decided to do the minimum to comply with his obligations to return the institute's property; Ethan said, "I remember I gave her [the dean] the very, very bare [programme] outlines. You know the basic reading list really, and when I left I took everything I had prepared". These examples are paradoxical because performing non-teaching duties and leaving behind materials created at work are standard requirements of academics at ITPs. By failing to carry out these tasks, the targets become wrongdoers too, and potentially have less power to claim that they are victims of mistreatment.

#### **5.6.3.2. Undermining**

The second most frequent variety of paradoxical resistance was undermining ( $n = 6$ ). In this variety of resistance, interviewees said they tried to undermine—that is, weaken or damage—a perceived perpetrator by using gossip, encouraging mobbing, or by trying to trap the perpetrator.

Although gossip tends to be a regular feature of organisational life, it can be used strategically or manipulatively to undermine people as suggested by the following examples. After suffering years of negative behaviour from her dean, Ngaire said she had accidentally discovered information about his lack of professional experience; she said, "He claimed he had been responsible for a programme in California, and in fact he hadn't actually been responsible for it, he was part of the team". Ngaire shared this information with other staff in an attempt to undermine her dean. In a different example, when a male head of school and a female supervisor mistreated certain staff members, salacious rumours about them began as a form of revenge, Huia explained: "Heaps of

gossip around the place. [My colleague] said [to the supervisor] ‘I hear you're shagging [the Head of School]’. Well she burst into tears and said ‘It is not true’”. Both Ngaire and Huia considered these approaches to be acceptable responses to their difficult circumstances.

A different way of undermining is to form a mob. Wiremu explained that he considered encouraging colleagues to undermine a supervisor in this way, stating:

*I said to [my colleague] one day, “We should have a bloody petition, you know, let's get rid of her. We should go round the school and say, ‘Do you like her or do you not? Give us your grievances.’”*

Although Wiremu said he had not carried out his threat, simply having a plan had helped him to cope with his abuse.

Finally, Ethan went further in his attempt to undermine a perpetrator. He explained that he had carried a secret recording device in his clothes in an attempt to trap his manager, he stated, “I tried to get her to say some of the things that she'd been saying. I just really wanted to nail her because she was incompetent.” Using secret recording devices is unlikely to be legal; however, Ethan's example indicates the extent to which he was prepared to go to resist his ill-treatment.

Gossiping, undermining a person to colleagues, and entrapment might normally be forms of bullying (or mobbing), but in these cases, interviewees considered their approaches acceptable responses to the ongoing abusive behaviours from the perpetrator and the absence of support from Human Resources staff.

### **5.6.3.3. Violence**

The third and final variety of paradoxical resistance was violence ( $n = 5$ ). Usually interviewees reported fantasies of carrying out a violent act, but in one case, an interviewee said he had actually threatened his manager with violence, Gerry stated:

*I said “I won't be coming round to smash your head in, I'll be sending some boys [gang members] round to smash your head in”,*

*and he said to me “You can't do that” and I said, “Do you wanna bet?”*

Gerry explained that he had heard his colleagues threaten to assault the manager by “Smashing his [the manager’s] head on the sidewalk”. Gerry noted that the manager did not bother these staff, so he decided to use this strategy himself. Although Gerry behaved inappropriately, and probably illegally, he said the approach had the effect of subduing his manager and reducing the frequency of the abusive behaviour.

Some interviewees fantasised about hitting their abusers themselves. For example, after years of abusive behaviour, Cindy knew what she would do to her manager if she could, she explained: “I want to slap her when there is no-one else around”. Similarly, Ethan said his colleague continued to be rude and overbearing, despite Ethan’s attempts to get along with him. Ethan felt frustrated by this behaviour and remarked “I just sort of feel like whacking him and saying: ‘You stupid idiot, just shut up’”. Thinking about how they would like to respond helped to restore a sense of power to the target, which in turn enabled them to cope.

Finally, the urge to commit violent acts on perpetrators to stop abusive behaviour can sometimes extend to family members. Lucinda said that her normally placid husband was prepared to use violence on his wife’s behalf, stating “He used to get very upset for me to the point where he was quite willing to come and punch [the manager] out”. Similarly, mild-mannered academic Andy reported, “Some of that [bullying] stuff happened to my wife and I got really angry and wanted to go and punch someone”. These examples reflect the intensity of the feelings that negative behaviour creates if problems are not resolved. They also show how resistance can involve people from outside the workplace, in effect, crossing over to partners and leading them to propose action, such as violence.

In summary, the subtheme of paradoxical resistance related to negative behaviours that interviewees reported using, or wanting to use, to help them cope with abusive behaviour at work. The subtheme comprised work-to-rule, undermining, and violence. The examples in this theme indicated the extent to which targets, and sometimes their families, are willing to go to resolve their situation. The examples give a sense of the interviewees’ frustration at being

unable to resolve their problems. The behaviours that interviewees reported appear manipulative, unprofessional, and, in certain cases, possibly illegal (and definitely so if enacted) but they help to illustrate the frustration and intense feelings that bullying arouses. This section clearly shows how unresolved bullying can result in workers behaving in inappropriate ways when other forms of resistance fail.

### *Discussion*

Responses to bullying varied according to targets' constraints and previous experiences. Resistance had the subthemes of (1) active, where targets used recognised complaints processes and targets confronted perpetrators, (2) passive, where targets sought social support, avoided confrontation, and deflected their experiences, and finally, (3) paradoxical, where targets indulged in negative behaviours that worked against the perpetrator and the organisation. The examples of active resistance, and the associated varieties of (a) complaints and (b) confrontation, focused on stopping the perpetrators' behaviour. On the other hand, passive resistance, and the varieties of (a) support, (b) avoidance, and (c) deflection, focused on the coping strategies that were useful for reducing the impact of the behaviour on the target without stopping it. Finally, targets directed certain varieties of paradoxical resistance at perpetrators with a view to stopping abuse, such as with threats of violence. Other actions, for example work-to-rule, were more general and unfocused; however, unlike active and passive resistance all these approaches tended to be unauthorised by the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1998) and may well have contributed to targets' problems.

Targets reported that active resistance was the most effective in reducing their suffering. Similar to the findings of Lutgen-Sandvik (2006), those who were able to use expert resources, like Ava's legal knowledge, or appeal to authority by using complaints processes, reported slightly better outcomes. Furthermore, targets who only threatened to use these means also reported improvements. However, active resistance sometimes became a trigger for further bullying, thus, whilst active resistance may have been helpful for some targets, there was no guarantee that this approach would be positive for everyone. Passive resistance maintained the status-quo and left the target in a holding pattern until the perpetrator was no longer present. Finally, paradoxical resistance did not help to

resolve difficulties; in fact, it had the potential to make them worse, but it did enable targets to feel that they held some power over their abusers.

The effectiveness of resistance may depend on the perpetrator. Scholars have argued that occasionally problems can be resolved if the perpetrator is an Accidental Bully (Namie & Namie, 2000). In such a case, the person does not realise the effect of their behaviour on others until someone draws their attention to it. Accidental bullies immediately take steps to modify the impact of their actions. In the current study, none of the targets reported that their experiences ended after bringing the problems to the perpetrator's attention. However, the threat of a personal grievance or acting in a confrontational manner was sometimes sufficient to moderate the difficulties (i.e., to stop or reduce certain behaviours but not to end the entire episode, as the perpetrator continued to bully in other ways), so there does appear to be partial connection with the concept of an accidental bully.

Targets used resistance in practical ways to enable them to cope with abusive behaviour and resist any urge or pressure to leave the organisation. This finding is in contrast to the symbolic acts workers sometimes use to feel that they have resisted the wishes of more powerful organisational members (Ashforth & Mael, 1998; Mumby, 2005). The use of resistance as a method of coping with bullying has similarities with the findings of Lutgen-Sandvik (2006). In her study, targets used five key approaches to resisting bullying and she organised them into *core resistance codes*. These codes are (1) *exodus* (leaving and encouraging others to do so), (2) *collective voice* (gaining support from colleagues), (3) *reverse discourse* (adopting pejorative labels, gaining influence, making complaints and keeping documentation), (4) *subversive (dis)obedience* (labour withdrawal, work-to-rule, being distant and retaliating), and finally, (5) *confrontation* (ridiculing the perpetrator). The current findings have examples that align with four of the five core resistance codes. These examples fit into the codes of collective voice (passive support), reverse discourse (actively making complaints), subversive (dis)obedience (paradoxically working-to-rule, undermining, and threatening violence), and confrontation (direct speaking and humour). The only contrast to emerge was the absence of examples of Exodus, as no-one described leaving the organisation as a form of resistance. However, the present study's methodology may have influenced this outcome, as people who had already left organisations

were less likely to be aware of the study than those who were still employed in ITPs. The subthemes of active, passive, and paradoxical resistance build on the work of Lutgen-Sandvik (2006), and therefore, these subthemes contribute to the workplace bullying literature by providing an alternative approach to naming and grouping forms of resistance.

The next section discusses the ways in which managers, HR staff, and union representatives handled complaints about abusive behaviour.

## **5.7. Organisational sequestering**

In the resistance section, several interviewees reported that they complained about their treatment to HR workers, managers, and union representatives. Unfortunately, most of the interviewees said their concerns and complaints received inappropriate treatment. As I analysed the transcripts it became apparent that a number of managers, HR staff, and union representatives were finding ways to avoid managing bullying. Consequently, I chose to group these experiences within the theme of Organisational Sequestering. Sequestering is a term used by Clair (1993) in her study of women who had experienced sexual harassment at work. She found that the women reframed their experiences to set them aside and avoid addressing them. By evading the problems in this way, the issue of sexual harassment remained unaddressed. Similar to Clair's (1993) notion of setting aside problems rather than addressing them, organisational sequestering occurs when organisations fail to take responsibility for workplace bullying. In this study, sequestering involved the setting aside of bullying by using excuses and avoiding the problems. The identification of sequestering is important, because setting aside complaints about workplace bullying results in problems remaining unresolved.

However, not all organisations used sequestering. During interviews with HR workers ( $n = 13$ ), two HR managers provided details of their organisations' proactive anti-bullying programmes. These programmes included compulsory training and on-going education for all staff, and a specific anti-bullying policy. The HR managers said that complaints about bullying still occurred at these proactive ITPs, but no one volunteered for an interview, which suggests that targets may have been satisfied with their organisation's handling of the complaints. In contrast, most organisations relied on general anti-harassment

policies, and typically HR staff appeared to be uncertain about how to manage bullying. At the opposite extreme to the proactive ITPs, one organisation effectively denied the existence of bullying and the largest number of interviewees came from this organisation.

This theme contains examples from interviewees who believed that their managers, HR, and unions set aside their concerns and complaints ( $n = 25$ ) and therefore, the majority of interviewees provided examples of the ways their reports of workplace bullying were sequestered. The theme also contains examples from HR workers ( $n = 5$ ), of whom some were involved in the sequestering of complaints. The subthemes of *reframing*, *rejigging*, and *rebuffing* emerged from the transcripts. A discussion of the subthemes and supporting examples follows.

### **5.7.1. Reframing**

Reframing is a way of viewing situations and people from different perspectives. This subtheme comprises the ways in which managers and HR workers reframed bullying to move it outside the responsibility of the organisation. Reframing emerged as the predominant subtheme ( $n = 12$ ), and consequently, the subtheme contains four varieties: (1) *reframing as a personal issue*, (2) *reframing as trivial*, (3) *reframing through denial*, and (4) *reframing as defence*.

#### **5.7.1.1. Reframing as a personal issue**

In the first variety, both HR staff and interviewees discussed the ways in which complaints about workplace bullying were reframed as personal issues. Some HR staff said that there were reasons for employees saying they felt bullied but these were not organisational matters. For example, Kristy remarked “There is very rarely just bullying; there’s usually other things, if they’ve got health issues, if there’s been a death in the family, if their workload is particularly high. It tends to put them in a vulnerable place”. This comment appears to blame the complainant because they may have been vulnerable, and implies that other issues are at the root of the complaint. Rationalising in this way sequesters the issues as personal matters, so they cease to be organisational problems, and this removes the need for action by HR.

HR workers also reframed the behaviour of perpetrators as a personal issue. For example, Evelyn referred to a case where several staff had complained about a manager's behaviour. However, she reframed their concerns by saying: "If you know the person and you know their background, you can see that it's not deliberate, it's kind of in their make-up, the background of that person. The intention is not to bully at all". This comment suggests that the manager's negative behaviour was excused as a matter of personal style by HR, rather than being something that the organisation should address, and the staff were at fault for interpreting it incorrectly. Manager Rona recalled a similar version of Evelyn's comment. When she tried to get help, HR staff told her: "There's no bullying [here], there's just misunderstandings and what you need to do is understand people's personalities and some people do lose their temper before others. It's a personality difference rather than bullying". These examples indicate HR workers reframed complaints of workplace bullying as the personal traits of targets and perpetrators rather than organisational issues. Reframing in this way removes any imperative for action from the organisation.

#### ***5.7.1.2. Reframing as trivial***

Some interviewees reported that when they aired their concerns with their managers, the responses suggested that the manager did not grasp the seriousness of the problem. For example, Tiffany stated "My boss wanted me to resolve it over a coffee and directed me to go out with [the perpetrator] for a coffee". Tiffany said this instruction distressed her because her colleague had been aggressive and she was frightened of him, so it would take more than a simple chat over coffee to correct matters. Similarly, Harry, an HR manager, reported that one of his managers had told two staff members to "Go and have a beer and sort it out". Harry noted that this was inappropriate and he provided the story as an example of how bullying can sometimes be reframed as a simple, interpersonal conflict that can easily be rectified. Reframing removes the need for any official work by managers and HR, so it may appear to be an attractive option. In the short-term, the organisation reduces the risk of mishandling the bullying case by deflecting in this way; however, in the long term this approach may backfire, as cases may become more complex and serious over time.

Trivialisation occurred in a slightly different way for two female interviewees who spoke of their experiences of bullying by female staff. In separate interviews about unrelated incidents, they both remarked that their managers appeared to reframe their problems as “women’s issues”, which took them out of the range of their male, senior managers’ concern. For example, support manager Sophia said she was being upward-bullied by a subordinate but when she tried to tell her manager, she was unable to communicate, Sophia explained, “I did speak to my manager. When I outlined it to him, I could tell he wasn’t interested. He saw it as a sort of women’s thing, I think”. Manager Rona reported a similar experience; she said, “The CEO knew that [my manager] was a bully but I think he thought it was just a catfight between two women”. Trivialising the issues meant interviewees were denied support because their negative experiences were viewed as minor, easy to resolve, or women’s issues and thus unworthy of consideration.

#### ***5.7.1.3. Reframing through denial***

Denying the existence of bullying emerged as a further form of reframing. For example, after HR workers told Rona that there was no bullying at her ITP, she tried to get help elsewhere. Rona said when she spoke with her manager, a member of the executive team, his response shocked her, she explained “I said ‘I’m starting to feel bullied’ and he said, ‘Don’t use that word’ and started screaming at me and he said, ‘Don’t say bullying; we’re not using that term at this institution’”. By refusing to use the term bullying, the senior manager made it much more difficult for Rona to communicate her issues. A different take on denial emerged through the comments of HR worker Freda, who said:

*I just wonder whether a lot of what gets reported is really bullying. Quite honestly the people that they’ve described as bullies, I don’t think that they’re that kind of person, and I’m not usually a judge of character, but I’ve never met a manager who I would describe as really grumpy or highly strung.*

In this example, Freda appeared to deny that bullying exists because she has not witnessed or experienced behaviour that she considered to be bullying. Indeed, she also framed it as if only grumpy or highly-strung people are bullies. As noted

in the literature review, people who lack knowledge or experience of bullying are unlikely to understand its impact and consequently, invisibility occurs, that is, observers are unable to understand problems as individuals are experiencing them (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). These examples suggest that invisibility may have been a factor in the responses, but also there appears to have been a concerted effort to deny the existence of bullying at this ITP.

#### ***5.7.1.4. Reframing as a defence***

A final form of reframing is claiming that bullying is a defence mechanism. In the only instance of this form of reframing, HR worker Freda believed people claimed to be targets to deflect attention from their poor performance; Freda stated “People who had known there was something coming up in the future, where their performance was to be questioned, have seen the approach as bullying”. By treating complaints about bullying as a response to being performance managed, Freda reframes bullying as being a defence mechanism. However, none of the target-interviewees referred to the performance management process in their stories. Freda’s comment is interesting because progressive discipline, which is synonymous with performance management, is a vital element in downward bullying in extant research (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003) but this is the only reference to it in this study.

Reframing provided HR and managers with a way of avoiding action and ignoring difficulties. However, not all problems were ignored and sometimes attempts were made to rectify situations. The next section discusses the ways in which organisations addressed bullying.

#### **5.7.2. Rejigging**

The second subtheme, rejigging, refers to the implementation of temporary or partial solutions that enabled interviewees to continue to work with perpetrators but that did not resolve the underlying problems. The title of this subtheme reflects the ways in which HR workers rejigged, or made minor adjustments to, the workplace to accommodate targets’ concerns ( $n = 7$ ). Rejigging usually dealt with the surface problem, for example, providing counselling for a distressed target, but did not manage the perpetrator’s behaviour. Overall, this approach

resulted in the problems being partially addressed, rather than completely resolved.

Some targets talked about the ways in which they were encouraged to work around abusive managers, either by avoiding direct contact or by taking witnesses into meetings. For example, Ken said after he had complained to the HR manager about his dean's behaviour, an arrangement was implemented to ensure that anything that was required of Ken by his dean would be requested through the HR manager. Ken described the situation as follows: "We just circumvented the dean and the management relationship because relating to [the dean] was just too difficult; it was too painful". Similarly, Wiremu reported that members of HR staff were aware of his difficulties with his supervisor, but they only provided minimal support, he explained, "On my last two appraisals I asked [HR] to be present as a witness and it's been all nice and lovely conversations as a result of that". However, Wiremu received no other support, nor was any action taken to improve the situation, so his other difficulties with his supervisor continued. These are examples of rejigging because HR supplied interim, surface-level solutions to the problems but in every case they did not manage the root cause.

Some targets received counselling or other forms of personal support to address their immediate problems. However, without action to improve the behaviour of the perpetrator, this approach only provided only a partial solution to the situation. For example, Olga said she had complained about her manager's behaviour and accepted in-house counselling. She said that although she had requested help to resolve the underlying issues, her requests went unheeded; Olga explained, "[HR] sent me to counselling, which is fair enough, and that was the last I heard of it. I said [my manager's] behaviour needs to be modified, she needs to be supervised but nothing happened". In this case, Olga's difficulties were effectively rejigged as a health-issue, and beyond helping her to cope, the organisation took no other action to resolve the situation.

The examples in this section indicate some of the ways in which HR workers use partial solutions to rejig problems. By treating the immediate difficulties but failing to address the underlying problem, HR workers sequester bullying, effectively supporting the continued use of abusive behaviours in their organisations.

### 5.7.3. Rebuffing

The third and final subtheme is rebuffing. This subtheme highlights the absence of action targets experienced when they requested help to address bullying ( $n = 7$ ). This section comprises the different ways in which interviewees said they felt pushed away. Examples of rebuffs came from managers, HR workers, and unions. Rebuffs were both active and passive.

Interviewees talked of how they had expected support and guidance from HR staff but this was not forthcoming and instead they felt pushed away. For example, Gerry said he felt that HR workers were trying to deter him from making a complaint, he stated:

*HR said that this would be on my record, this complaint; they went down that road first. They said, "This makes it official" with quotation marks. "This will be recorded and will involve a lot of people. Walls are thin."*

Gerry said that this response worried him and he was reluctant to take the matter further. Similarly, Rona explained how the HR manager rebuffed her, "[The HR manager] said, 'You can try to do something, you can [complain] then your life will get worse and you will have a black mark against you forever for complaining'". Finally, Perry said he received support from HR initially, but he found that their attitude towards him changed when he asked for help with a formal complaint. He explained his experience as follows: "The opinions of HR, as an informal discussion, were 'Sorry this is going on, don't agree with it, feel corrupted morally for the comments that they're making', this was informal, but formally they would take a very different [unhelpful] tack". Perry said he questioned the validity of the process, and could not understand why HR staff would provide him with personal support whilst allowing abusive behaviour to continue.

All of these examples illustrate ways in which HR staff actively rebuffed targets and avoided taking any action to manage bullying. It also shows how HR workers in some ITPs appear to have little interest in defending and supporting bullied employees. This approach had the effect of deterring the targets from pursuing their complaints.

Rebuffs were not always so obvious and sometimes the absence of communication acted as a passive form of rebuff. Some interviewees said that they were unable to get responses to their complaints about abusive behaviour when they tried to contact their manager or HR. For example, Felix explained the difficulty of making contact with his HR manager, stating, “We send e-mails to make appointments and there's no way you can see the Human Resource Manager”. HR’s failure to respond to meeting requests resulted in Felix feeling pushed away and this compounded his sense of abuse. Similarly, Uma reported that her attempts to resolve problems with her line manager were unsuccessful because he did not respond, she stated:

*I sent very strong letters, but they just didn't seem to really go anywhere. He'd fob it off [and say] “Oh I'll think about it.” You know, that kind of thing, “I'll get back to you later” but he didn't.*

In these examples, the interviewees felt rebuffed by the lack of communication, which made it very difficult for them to take action and pursue their concerns.

An absence of knowledge or ability to support targets also acted as a rebuff. Sometimes targets received general support but it lacked any action or advice about reaching a resolution. For example, after repeated verbal abuse from her dean, Ngaire stated, “Probably if I'd had better HR advice I think I would have moved to the next level. I think those young women in HR, they were lovely, but they were quite inexperienced as well”. Ngaire realised that she was unlikely to receive any help to change her perpetrator’s behaviour, so she stopped trying to fix the problems and found other ways to resist. Wiremu, who worked at the same organisation, supported Ngaire’s view. Wiremu described his experience as follows:

*I went earlier this year to HR and spoke to one of the girls there a few times. They were okay, but I really found them a little bit ineffective; they sit there and nod, you know, and that's all.*

This inaction resulted in Wiremu using alternative approaches to manage his negative experiences.

Jenny, an HR worker, acknowledged the difficulties that targets faced. She explained that sometimes managers simply “refused to manage bullying” and she reported that they ignored her attempts to implement the organisation’s anti-harassment policy. The examples so far, have shown how targets received rebuffs from managers and HR staff, in the forms of off-putting comments, lack of communication, or lack of action to resolve problems.

Finally, unions also played a role in sequestering bullying. Two interviewees said they had approached their union for support but assistance had not been forthcoming. In the first example, Tiffany explained that she had been to her union representative and asked for help but the representative sent her by an unnecessarily circuitous route to get it, she explained “I had people along the way going ‘We can’t be involved in this’, because the union delegates are actually members of staff, and they didn’t want to be involved. It was horrendous”. Another interviewee, Rona, remarked that her union representative lacked the skills to deal with more complex situations. She explained what happened when she took a union representative with her to see the HR manager, “He was completely floored by [the HR manager’s response], and he said he didn’t know what to do. He said, “I don’t know what to advise you””. Rona said the representative’s response meant she was denied the help that she had expected to receive. For both of these targets the absence of support from the unions compounded their difficulties.

In summary, the examples above indicate that rebuffs occurred in different ways. Rebuffs included direct attempts to deter targets from making complaints, ignoring their concerns, or simply lacking the knowledge to assist. Targets received rebuffs from HR workers, managers, and union representatives.

### ***Discussion***

Organisational sequestering indicates that managers, HR workers and unions typically avoided dealing with bullying in any substantive way. The responses fitted into the themes of (1) reframing the issue, (2) rejigging the workplace, and (3) rebuffing the target’s complaints. Reframing involved viewing targets’ complaints of bullying as personal issues, trivial matters, denying their existence, and claiming the target used them as forms of defence in order to avoid taking action. Rejigging the workplace involved setting up systems that allowed targets

to work around perpetrators, but did not resolve the root problems. Finally rebuffing involved deterring targets from making complaints by using veiled threats or ignoring issues and denying help.

Organisational sequestering prevented bullying from being resolved and consequently this approach created additional problems for targets. Both HR workers and targets explained the different ways in which targets' concerns about bullying were set aside. The experiences of targets in this study suggest that HR staff did not work in the interests of employees but instead acted in ways that minimised their own input, for example, reframing issues as the fault of the target or creating temporary solutions to work around perpetrators. Targets also reported that HR workers sometimes lacked the skills or resources to resolve workplace-bullying complaints.

Occasionally, targets noted that union representatives used organisational sequestering techniques. This could be a particular problem when representatives are close to the perpetrator, either as a friend or neighbour, or simply by virtue of working at the same organisation. The difficulty of close proximity may be a special feature of New Zealand, as much of the country is sparsely populated and consequently settlements are often small. Close-knit communities, and multiple roles in them, may lead to union representatives being unwilling to take action, as they have competing priorities, and this may also be the case for HR workers. In addition, union representatives may be fearful for their own jobs if they try to manage bullying, so this may be a further reason why they might be unwilling to become involved. More broadly, and as discussed in section 2.10., New Zealand unions have a relatively low power base now compared to the 1960s and 70s, which might partially explain their reluctance to support their members.

The identification of organisational sequestering is important, because it draws attention to a behaviour that effectively condones bullying. Reframing situations so that fault lies with the target, or by failing to act to resolve problems, leads to further undermining and abuse of targets, and this approach prolongs the difficulties for all concerned. A comparison of the findings with existing literature shows both similarity and difference. Scholars have noted that managers, HR workers and union representatives avoid responsibility for rectifying bullying, through either a lack of willingness or lack of ability to resolve bullying, (e.g., Namie & Namie, 2000; Noronha & D'Cruz, 2008). However, noting the

temporary nature of rejigged solutions highlights the complexity of bullying and emphasises the need for solutions that deal with all aspects of the problem. Naming and recognising the ways in which those who have responsibility for managing bullying avoid it, provides a step towards addressing it. Therefore, the findings in this section provide a small contribution to the literature through the creation of the organisational sequestering theme and its associated subthemes of reframing, rejigging, and rebuffering.

In summary, organisational sequestering highlights the construction of approaches that result in the maintenance of the status quo, and consequently the continuation of bullying. Solutions to workplace bullying do transpire eventually and the next section explains the ways in which bullying is ultimately resolved.

## **5.8. Resolution**

This theme comprises the ways in which workplace bullying ended for interviewees. For some interviewees bullying was ongoing, but others were able to reflect on the ways in which their situation ended. As interviewees discussed their experiences, it emerged that full resolution occurred only when the perpetrator and target no longer worked together. As I analysed the examples, the subthemes of *perpetrator leaves* and *target leaves* emerged. A discussion of the subthemes and examples follows.

### **5.8.1. Perpetrator leaves**

The most frequently reported resolution was the perpetrator departing the workgroup ( $n = 12$ ). Targets reported that perpetrators left for different positions in the same organisation, or left the organisation completely because of redundancy or by resigning. When perpetrators departed, interviewees reported that the change in the work environment was perceptible. For example, Cindy described what happened when her manager left, stating “Our manager was seconded to another position...and it was almost like you could feel the whole department go ‘Ahhhh’ (exhale). It was just lovely; everybody was almost lighter. The change, just not having her physically there, was wonderful.” In this case, an internal transfer provided a resolution for one target.

Sometimes perpetrators left as part of a larger process, as with Ken’s manager. As discussed in the rejigging section of organisational sequestering, Ken

complained to his CEO about his manager's abusive behaviour, and the HR manager arranged for Ken to work around his manager but took no formal action to rectify the situation. Ken explained how the situation ended, "Ultimately [the perpetrator] left.... They restructured him out". Ken said that although his problems disappeared, he felt that allowing the perpetrator to leave gracefully, and receive a financial settlement, lacked justice, because the CEO knew of the manager's inappropriate behaviour. Sometimes chance resolved situations, as with Felix's colleague, he explained: "She didn't come back [the] next year. Apparently she had some sort of mental, you know, overload". Finally, after complaining about what she saw as an unfair restructure, Ava said her manager departed of his own volition, she explained, "Our Head of School left at the end of the year; he resigned. He got himself in such a bad position that he didn't have anywhere else to go". Again, the perpetrator left without censure, despite Ava's formal complaint about him. None of the interviewees reported that their perpetrator received criticism for their actions and all 12 of the departing perpetrators left their positions for reasons unrelated to their abusive behaviour.

### **5.8.2. Target leaves**

The second theme to emerge was the departure of the target. Of the targets who said they had left their jobs ( $n = 11$ ), most said they went of their own volition. Two said that unfair restructuring processes forced them out of their jobs and both took formal action against their employers. One received a payout and another was in the process of taking his case to the employment court. All who said that they had chosen to leave ( $n = 7$ ) explained that they did so because they had exhausted the resistance options that they felt were available to them. Most reported that they had secured other positions. For example, Belinda commented that "After a lot of frustrating months, first of all trying to cure it, of course, then trying to understand it, then realising I couldn't fix it, I walked, in the same institute, but a different department". Similarly, Perry said he decided that his position was untenable after his CEO bullied him, so he found a new job before leaving, he explained, "I found I could not continue, life was only going to get worse from that point on, and so I resigned".

Sometimes the effects of bullying were so severe that some targets became concerned for their health. For example, despite trying to resolve her difficulties

with her manager, Zoe explained that she decided to leave without securing alternative employment, “I knew if I’d stayed there I probably would have died. I mean that sounds really dramatic, but my health would have packed in one way or the other”. After taking a break to recover from her experiences, Zoe subsequently found alternative work. Similarly, after resisting several episodes of bullying, Xanthe decided she could do no more, so she relinquished her management role to return to teaching, she summarised it as follows:

*I think the thing that wore me down with her [the dean], and in the end I resigned that position, was I knew couldn't win because she and Rob [an assistant] were an item of some kind that I couldn't fight, and my health continued to be a problem.*

Xanthe was fortunate to gain an alternative role that removed her from direct contact with her abusers, but enabled her to stay in the same organisation. In all of the examples, targets chose to leave their positions because they had exhausted the options that they perceived were available to them.

### ***Discussion***

A break in the work relationship resolved the process of bullying for the targets in this study. In this theme, all of the targets reported that their problems ended when they no longer worked with the person that they felt was abusing them. Either the perpetrator or the target broke the employment relationship by leaving the immediate work environment and sometimes the organisation.

No other examples of resolutions emerged. No targets reported making-up over a coffee or a beer, becoming friends, or working in a trusting way with the perpetrator again. Although targets reported examples of active resistance that reduced abusive behaviour (in section 5.6.1.) and examples of helpful rejigging by HR that enabled them to cope (in section 5.7.2.), these approaches provided only temporary respite for targets, as they did not resolve the underlying issues. Given that earlier findings in this study indicated that a change of the composition of the workgroup sometimes precipitated workplace bullying (in section 5.1.), it appears that it also provided the resolution.

Establishing the ways in which bullying ends provides an important finding, as the focus of research is generally placed on bullying behaviours and

their impact, rather than on resolution of the situation. However, it is important to note that resolutions in this section are only from the perspective of targets. Separating the parties is unlikely to rectify the problems if the perpetrator remains in the organisation, as sooner or later this person will simply select a new target and the bullying process will start again (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003). Furthermore, breaking relationships did not automatically remedy the harm caused by bullying. For example, Felix's perpetrator left and the abusive behaviours stopped but he felt unable to regain his former enthusiasm for his work, he explained, "I still feel even now I don't feel any ownership of this place anymore. It's just a job now. I used to put a lot of energy into it but now I've just switched off to everything really". Therefore, stopping the behaviours is helpful but bullying may have longer lasting effects on other aspects of work, such as organisational commitment and the performance of additional roles outside the strict interpretation of the target's employment contract. This finding provides a strong argument for managing bullying promptly, thoroughly, and fairly.

In conclusion, interviewees said that problems were only resolved when they no longer worked with the perpetrator and the most frequent resolution reported was the perpetrator's departure. The only other form of resolution was the departure of the target. Departure did not necessarily mean leaving the organisation, although this was sometimes the case, but it always required the direct working relationship to cease.

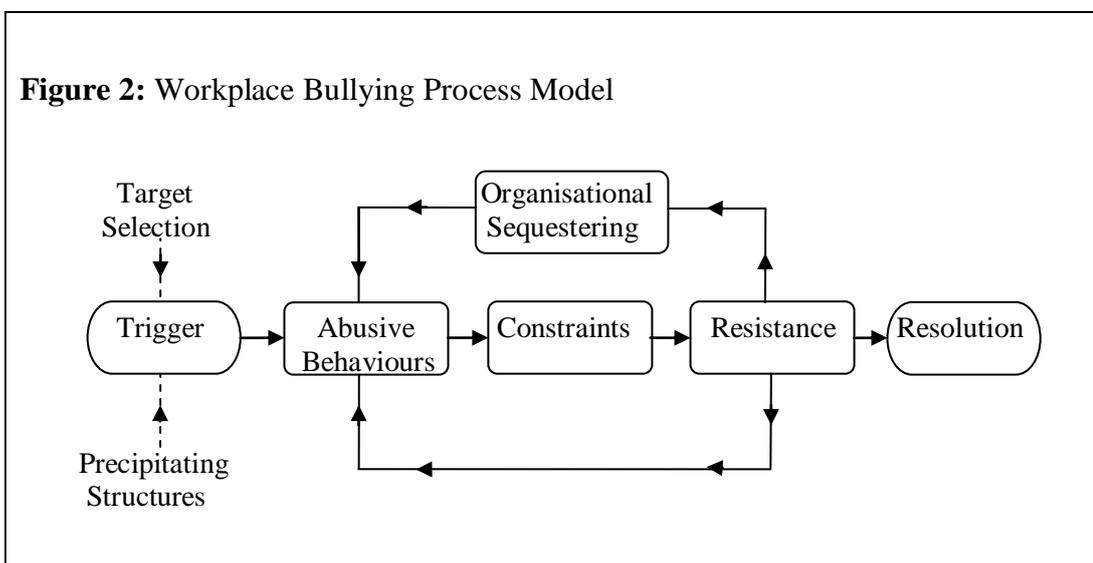
## **5.9. Workplace bullying process model**

In this chapter research question 2 ("How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?") is answered using qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with targets and HR workers. Interviewees provided a wide range of bullying experiences that emerged into eight themes. I arranged the themes into a model of workplace bullying to illustrate the ways in which they link. The model answers research question 2, by showing that bullying is an iterative process that happens in defined circumstances, and it is only resolved when the work relationship ends.

Although the stories told by the interviewees contained different accounts of workplace bullying, when the stories were broken down into themes these accounts followed the same process, as shown in figure 2. This process begins

with precipitating structures and target selection. These elements have a dotted line relationship to the rest of the model because their presence does not automatically lead to bullying. For example, employees in an organisation that is undertaking a restructure of its operations will not necessarily be subjected to bullying, but there is a greater likelihood that this may happen (Salin, 2003b). Similarly, when a perpetrator selects a potential target for bullying a suitable environment must be in place to permit bullying to develop. As previously noted, bullying involves repetitive actions, so organisations that are settled, or that actively implement anti-bullying measures, seem less likely to provide a suitable environment for bullying to gain purchase.

The targets in this study had all experienced bullying, so all of them progressed to the main body of the process. Interviewees spoke of why they thought perpetrators chose them, events that triggered the bullying, the abusive behaviours they experienced, the constraints they felt when choosing how to respond, how they resisted in order to remain in their jobs, the difficulties they experienced when seeking help, and, finally, how the episode was resolved.



The model illustrates the three potential outcomes offered by resistance (i.e., more abusive behaviours, organisational sequestering, or someone leaving the workplace). The only effective resistance reported was the active use of complaints and confrontation. These approaches did not resolve bullying but they sometimes provided respite until the work relationship ceased. Interviewees reported that Personal Grievances (PGs) and threats of PGs were most successful

but typically organisations sequestered informal complaints, which led to further abusive behaviour, as shown in figure 2. When interviewees used passive and paradoxical resistance, they reported that they remained in a holding pattern of repeated abusive behaviours and coping until they took formal action or a change occurred that meant they no longer worked with the perpetrator.

The stories indicated that targets made several iterations of the process whilst trying to resist their experiences and the process could continue for years. It is important to remember that the end of the process is from the perspective of the target only and the perpetrator may continue to use abusive behaviour with different targets (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Former targets need time to recover from their experiences and this recovery period can vary in length. Interviewees in this study were often speaking of situations that had occurred many months, if not years, earlier. For example, Ngaire was recounting events that had ended over four years earlier, while Ken spoke of experiences that began eight years before the interview. As they spoke, targets' distress and anger was clearly still present, indicating that bullying can create deep-seated emotions that are hard to resolve.

All of the examples provided by targets fitted into the process model themes. To illustrate the model, tables 16 to 19 show four different sample cases in tabular form. Two of the examples are from academics, one is from a manager, and the other is from a technician; all from different ITPs. The sample cases are from an equal number of men and women, and they provide a mix of upward, downward, and horizontal experiences. The tables contain simple summaries of the interviewees' experiences in order to create the display; however, the actual events were far more complex than is shown. The first column on the left provides overarching themes from the process model; subsequent columns provide subtheme titles and examples that are read from the top down. The tables help to illustrate the iterative nature of the bullying process. In the first three examples, the process was complete, whilst in the last example it was ongoing. The tables illustrate the flexibility of the process model and the way in which it incorporates a range of different experiences.

Table 16

*Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Horizontal*

<u>Target:</u> <u>Technician</u>	<u>First</u> <u>Iteration</u>	<u>Second</u> <u>Iteration</u>	<u>Third</u> <u>Iteration</u>
Precipitating Structure	Restructure <i>Financial pressure</i>	↓	↓
Target Selection	Standing out <i>Good professional reputation</i>	↓	↓
Trigger	Conflict <i>Refused to help colleague</i>	↓	↓
Abusive Behaviour	Verbal aggression <i>Shouting, Rudeness</i>	Verbal aggression <i>Shouting, rudeness, undermining</i>	Denial of employment rights <i>Unfair complaint process</i>
Constraints	Cash <i>Shortage of jobs in community</i>	Cash <i>Shortage of jobs in community</i>	Cash <i>Shortage of jobs in community</i>
Resistance	Passive <i>Family support Ignored perpetrator</i>	Active <i>Informal complaint</i>	Active <i>Threatened formal action</i>
Organisational sequestering	None	Reframed <i>Supported perpetrator</i>	Rejigged <i>Avoided contact</i>
Resolution (End)	Go to second Iteration	Go to third iteration	Perpetrator resigned

Table 17  
*Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Upward then  
 Downward*

<u>Target: Manager</u>	<u>First Iteration</u>	<u>Second Iteration</u>	<u>Third Iteration</u>
Precipitating Structure	Restructure <i>Financial pressure</i>	New Person <i>New CEO</i>	↓
Target selection	Standing out <i>Section manager</i>	Standing out <i>Successful, young manager</i>	↓
Trigger	Conflict <i>Introduced new work system</i>	Conflict <i>Over budget cuts</i>	↓
Abusive behaviour	Aggression <i>Unfair complaints Rudeness</i>	Inequitable treatment <i>Threats of job loss Multiple audits</i>	Denied employment rights <i>Unfair disciplinary process</i>
Constraints	Cash <i>Shortage of jobs Family to support</i>	Cash <i>Shortage of jobs Family to support</i>	Cash <i>Shortage of jobs Family to support</i>
Resistance	Passive <i>Tried to ignore</i>	Passive <i>Colleague support</i>	Active <i>Approached HR</i>
Organisational sequestering	Reframed <i>Line manager encouraged mob</i>	Reframed <i>Professional issues</i>	Rebuffed <i>Private support Professional apathy</i>
Resolution (End)	Go to second Iteration	Go to third iteration	Target resigned

Table 18  
*Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Downward then horizontal*

<u>Target:</u> <u>Academic</u>	<u>First</u> <u>Iteration</u>	<u>Second</u> <u>Iteration</u>	<u>Third</u> <u>Iteration</u>
Precipitating Structure	Restructure <i>Fewer students</i>	↓	↓
Target selection	Standing out <i>Member of a successful team</i>	↓	↓
Trigger	Conflict <i>Openly disagreed with manager</i>	↓	↓
Abusive behaviour	Inequitable treatment and Aggression <i>Unfair workloads Shouting, rudeness</i>	Ostracism <i>Ignored by colleagues</i>	Inequitable treatment <i>Refusal to acknowledge the distress caused</i>
Constraints	None	None	None
Resistance	Active <i>Complained to manager</i>	Active <i>Complained to HR</i>	Active <i>Complained to Employment Court</i>
Organisational sequestering	Rebuff <i>Manager not open to discussion</i>	Reframed <i>Supported complaint Refused to apologise</i>	Reframed <i>Claimed problem was resolved</i>
Resolution (End)	Go to second Iteration	Perpetrator resigned	Public apology and compensation given

Table 19

*Summary of a Workplace Bullying Process Experience: Downward and ongoing*

<u>Target</u> <u>Academic</u>	<u>First</u> <u>Iteration</u>	<u>Second</u> <u>Iteration</u>
Precipitating Structure	Restructure <i>Fewer students</i>	↓
Target selection	Standing up <i>Earlier complaint about manager</i>	↓
Trigger	Conflict <i>Declined extra work</i>	↓
Abusive behaviour	Inequitable treatment <i>Unfair workloads</i>	Ostracism <i>Ignored by manager</i>
Constraints	Cash <i>Few suitable jobs</i>	Cash <i>Few suitable jobs</i>
Resistance	Paradoxical <i>Work-to-rule</i>	Passive <i>External support Commitment to students</i>
Organisational sequestering	Reframed <i>Blamed target's health</i>	Reframed <i>Supported manager</i>
Resolution (End)	Go to second iteration	None - Ongoing

The proposed model builds on scholars' earlier work. As discussed in the literature review, Leymann (1990) and Lutgen-Sandvik (2003) developed models to explain the process of workplace bullying. The process model proposed in this study complements and extends existing models by including all types of bullying and a greater range of experiences. It also considers the role of context in the emergence of bullying through the inclusion of precipitating structures, which existing models do not fully reflect. Most importantly, the model presented here derives inductively from a systematic analysis of targets' experiences of bullying. For ease of reference, summaries of the existing processes appear in table 20.

Table 20

*Summary Comparison of Existing Workplace Bullying Processes*

Leymann (1990)	Lutgen-Sandvik (2003)
<p><u>Phase 1 – Selection</u> Critical incident The target draws attention to him/herself</p>	<p><u>1. Initial incident - cycle generation</u> Target comes to negative attention Organisational pressure increases</p>
<p><u>Phase 2 - Behaviours</u> Bullying behaviours are used consistently over a long period</p>	<p><u>2. Progressive discipline</u> Organisation meets legal requirements of due process</p>
<p><u>Phase 3 – Target reaction</u> The perpetrator's behaviours disturb the target and his or her work suffers, resulting in managers treating the target as a problem worker</p>	<p><u>3. Turning point</u> Repetition, reframing, branding Target seeks support and corroboration</p>
<p><u>Phase 4 – Expulsion</u> The organisation expels the target possibly after long-term sick leave, by dismissal or other arrangement</p>	<p><u>4. Organisational ambivalence</u> Upper management hears of abuse Responses vary</p> <p><u>5. Isolation/silencing</u> Peer / family support withdrawn Target and Audience may be silenced</p> <p><u>6. Expulsion cycle</u> Regeneration, target quits, is fired, transferred, takes extended sick leave New target emerges – go back to 1</p>

Comparing the interview results to the models in table 20 provides some interesting findings. Results from the current study are consistent with the early stages of the existing processes; however, after phase 2 in Leymann's cycle and phase 1 in Lutgen-Sandvik's version, the findings no longer fit into these models.

To elaborate, in the Communicative Cycle of Employee Abuse (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003), supervisors used--or perhaps more correctly abused--their power by closely managing and undermining targets; whilst in Leymann's (1990) model managers noted targets' declining work performance. Superiors then used a structured disciplinary system to oust the target and minimise any opportunity for reprisals or legal challenges. In the ITP sector, managers have the opportunity to use performance management processes, which are synonymous with progressive discipline, to modify employee behaviour. In the current study, none of the 31 targets reported being the focus of progressive discipline or performance management. This finding also contradicts one of the HR interviewees, Freda, who reframed bullying complaints as a defence against the performance management process. Of course, targets may well have told stories that were unduly flattering of themselves; however, as they shared their stories in a confidential environment and provided large quantities of personal information, it seems unlikely that they might have neglected to discuss performance management, if it had been a factor in their experiences.

Where progressive discipline did emerge, it was a trigger in upward bullying. Three managers (Sophia, Perry, and Brandon) reported that their attempts to use performance management strategies on team members acted as triggers for them (the managers) to become the targets of mobbing by subordinate staff. Therefore, the findings associated with performance management are fundamentally different from both Lutgen-Sandvik's (2003) and Leymann's (1990) models.

The focus of the studies might provide reasons for the different findings. Leymann's (1990) model illustrates mobbing by colleagues in an industrial environment. This work took place when research into bullying was in its infancy and Leymann was a pioneer in this area, which may explain the narrower focus of his study. Lutgen-Sandvik's (2003) conceptual model focuses on downward bullying. This model emerged from a synthesis of existing case studies and the author's experience of working in two organisations. In contrast, the basis of the proposed model is primary research from 12 organisations, from the same sector, with different groups of workers and types of bullying, and these differences may provide an explanation for the apparent mismatch.

The proposed *workplace bullying process model* provides a framework that summarises thematic groupings of a broad range of grounded experiences. The model incorporates the most frequent form of bullying, downward, and the less frequent forms of horizontal and upward bullying. The model shows the full process of bullying, including its context, from the perspective of targets, which supplements existing knowledge. Overall, the model should provide a useful contribution to literature and add to practical understanding of bullying.

## **5.10. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the results of the thematic analysis of interviews. Following the analysis of the separate stages of bullying, its complexity began to emerge. Not only did interviewees report a range of abusive behaviours but they also reported a range of responses in terms of resisting. Targets modified their responses according to their personal circumstances and their beliefs about the level of support they would get from their organisation. The findings indicate that bullying is much more than a simple personality conflict or a disruption involving a few disaffected staff members. This chapter has shown that bullying is an iterative process that only ends with the severing of the target and perpetrators' work relationship. The findings distilled into a workplace bullying process model that illustrates the range of experiences that targets encountered and offers an extended insight into the phenomenon. The next chapter focuses on the metaphors that interviewees used to describe workplace bullying and it provides an insight into how bullying feels for targets.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **INTERVIEW RESULTS**

### **METAPHORS AND EMOTIONS**

This chapter presents the second and final set of results from an analysis of semi-structured interviews about workplace bullying. The previous chapter focused on how interviewees constructed the bullying process; whilst in the current chapter, the focus is on interviewees' emotional responses to bullying. Thus, chapter 5 focused on the ways in which the interviewees understood the process intellectually, whilst the current chapter provides an account of how they said bullying felt.

In this chapter, metaphors are analysed to provide an insight into emotions associated with workplace bullying. As discussed in section 2.9., metaphors use descriptions of known events, or items, to communicate less tangible phenomena, like emotions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Emotions play an important role in work relationships, by defining and maintaining feelings of liking, respect, openness, and trust (Waldron, 2000). When such relationships are damaged, negative feelings, such as suspicion, jealousy, and anger may emerge, and these emotions may result in people feeling abused. By focusing on targets' emotions, aspects of bullying that are usually lost in surveys and statistical analyses may be highlighted (Waldron, 2000), and this analysis may help to contextualise and enrich existing workplace bullying research (Tracy et al., 2006). By identifying targets' feelings, rather than their cognitive understanding of experiences, this chapter increases the likelihood of workplace bullying being understood, especially by those who have not experienced it.

Therefore, goal of this chapter is to explain how metaphors communicate emotions of workplace bullying in order to answer research question 3: "How do targets use metaphors to construct the emotional experience of bullying?" The chapter identifies the key groups of metaphors used for describing (1) bullying experiences, (2) perpetrators, and (3) targets. Emergent emotions from these metaphors are discussed within each section, including how those emotions may be seen as clustering together into categories of similar emotions. A comparison

of the metaphors and emotions identified in two similar studies follows. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the contributions this study makes to literature.

## 6.1. Metaphors of bullying experiences

The majority of interviewees (22 of 31) used metaphors to describe how being bullied felt. The metaphors selected for analysis were those repeatedly used by targets and those that were an integral part of target's stories; this approach aligned with stage 1 of Steger's (2007) three-stage metaphor analysis process (discussed in section 3.4.2.)

A broad range of metaphors emerged and some interviewees used multiple metaphors in their accounts. Similar metaphors cluster under the themes of *violence, madness, natural forces, water, desert islands, games, and hell*. The following sections present metaphors in descending order of the number of interviewees who used them, rather than the number of times they were used. In each section I describe the thematic category, provide quotes to illustrate and substantiate the category, explain the conditions under which this particular group of metaphors is used, and interpret the underlying emotions conveyed by metaphors in the category (in particular, by identifying associations and background to interpret the metaphors) using Steger's guidelines. The emergent emotions are then organised according to Storm and Storm's (1987) taxonomy of primary emotions. This taxonomy identifies three groups of primary negative emotions, (1) *shame, sadness, and pain*, (2) *anxiety and fear*, and (3) *anger, hatred, and disgust*. Table 21 shows some examples of the terms used in each group. The list is not exhaustive but gives a sense of the range of emotion labels used for each cluster.

Table 21  
*Examples of Negative Terms in Storm and Storm's Taxonomy (1987)*

<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety, fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
betrayed	agitated	animosity
discouraged	apprehensive	defiant
drained	dread	distrust
intimidated	horror	frustrated
isolated	scared	indignant

The primary emotions comprise a range of terms for feelings, as shown in table 21. These groups provide a useful structure for arranging and comparing the emergent emotions in this analysis. The following sections present targets' metaphors of workplace bullying and the associated emotions.

### **6.1.1. Violence**

The theme of violence comprises a range of examples that includes (a) *fights and battles*, (b) *attacks*, and (c) *torture or punishment*. Eight interviewees used metaphors that involved violence, and some used multiple metaphors from this theme to describe their experiences.

#### ***6.1.1.1. Fights and battles***

Fight metaphors typically represent conflict (Buzzanell & Burrell, 1997). Fights and battles may be associated (Steger's stage 2) with the pitting of people against each other in aggressive situations where only one side wins, but both sets of opponents may get hurt. The metaphors of fights and battles have an unusual feature that is absent from most other metaphors used for bullying experiences, in that they imply an opportunity exists to rebel or take control of the situation (Tracy et al., 2006). That is, they imply that the target retains a sense of agency. Agency also manifested itself in the targets' choice of resistance. Therefore, it is fitting that these metaphors were used to describe situations in which the use of active resistance predominated.

The following examples illustrate the ways in which interviewees used fight metaphors to describe experiences of actively resisting bullying. Ava explained that she took legal action against her employer for not managing her manager's bullying behaviour properly. As she reflected on her experiences, the following metaphors emerged:

*When this started, I thought this is a sword-fight. This is just going to be a clash. 'The Sword Fight' is the name I gave it and that's what it really was. It was just a complete clash of wills; and talk about a metaphor, it was a battle, blow-by-blow, strike-by-strike battle.*

The metaphors Ava uses, “sword fight”, “clash”, and “battle”, describe violent interactions with enemies. These metaphors immediately reflect emotions such as *anger* and *aggression*.

Traditionally, the metaphor of “crossing swords” has been associated with declaring opposition, entering into a dispute or starting a controversy (Wilkinson, 2002, p. 50). This description reflects Ava’s background story (Steger’s stage 3) of a entering a conflict to protect her professional standing and ultimately her job. Her unprompted choice of metaphor was apt because it highlighted her skill and emphasised her perception of having the power to repeatedly fight the perpetrator and ultimately win the battle.

A brief review of Ava’s background story provides an opportunity to consider additional, less obvious emotions that may be associated with these metaphors. Ava explained that she considered herself a professional, both in her field and as an educator, and she viewed her manager as unprofessional in his work. Her faith in her knowledge of employment law, and the legal system in general, gave her personal resources and confidence to retaliate against the abuse. This additional information enables the association of further emotions from the metaphors, such as Ava’s *resentment*, *defiance*, and *offence* at her manager’s behaviour, and hence her wish to fight him. Atypically, Ava won her case.

More frequently, retaliation appeared to be protracted and futile, as reflected in other interviewees’ use of battle metaphors. For example, Tiffany described her daily interactions with abusive colleagues as follows: “It’s just a constant battleground, and some days I win, and some days I don’t”. She added, by way of background, “I really enjoyed the job [before the bullying started]. Now, I don’t even want to go into the office and I live for Friday afternoons”. Feelings of *weariness* and *resignation* emerge from Tiffany’s reference to the mixed results from her battles, and her background story supports these feelings; it also reflects her overall *unhappiness* and *disappointment* with her situation. Ethan had similar experiences, and he explained: “It took all my, kind of, energy and draining my, sort of, you know, confidence levels and things like that and attacking my self-esteem to try and battle those two [bullying colleagues]”. The metaphor of the battle draining Ethan’s resources reflects feelings of *dejection*, *weakness*, and *powerlessness* and Ethan’s background story of his manager’s unwillingness to help him with his difficulties augmented these feelings.

Metaphors of fights and battles, in conjunction with interviewees' stories, reflected a broad range of negative feelings, the most prominent being anger, aggression, defiance, dejection, disappointment, offence, powerlessness, resentment, resignation, unhappiness, weakness, and weariness. Some feelings, for example anger, defiance, and resentment, appear to be directed at the perpetrator and these emotions may have provided the target with the impetus for active resistance. However, it seems that when attempts at active resistance failed targets' emotions became inwardly focused resulting in such feelings as unhappiness, resignation, and weakness.

The emotions associated with metaphors of fights and battles cluster around groups 1 and 3 of Storm and Storm's (1987) negative primary emotional groups (i.e., shame, sadness, and pain, and anger, hatred, and disgust), as shown in table 22. Weakness, weariness, and powerlessness are not listed in the primary groups but appear to fit into group 1 (shame, sadness, and pain). Specifically, weakness and powerlessness are very similar to, if not synonymous with, being *intimidated* and *oppressed*, whilst weariness is synonymous with *drained* and *discouraged*. No emotions emerged that fitted into primary group 2 (anxiety and fear). The emergent emotions divide distinctly between those associated with a successful, completed outcome (Ava's example) and those associated with ongoing difficulties after unsuccessful active resistance (Tiffany and Ethan's examples).

A key component of the examples in this section is the implication that targets perceived they had some power to retaliate or defend themselves, even if they were less successful, but this was not the case with other violence metaphors. The remaining parts of this section discuss alternative metaphors of violence.

#### **6.1.1.2. Attacks**

A further metaphor of violence is attacks. Unlike a fight or battle, an attack implies a one-way process: an aggressor and a passive target or victim. That is, the target has reduced agency in the attack metaphor compared to metaphors of fights or battles. Although potentially one could retaliate in an attack, the targets who used the attack metaphor perceived that they were unable to do so. For example, Cindy was recovering from serious injuries sustained in an accident, so she relied on her colleagues to support her when her manager became abusive.

She explained that she avoided being alone because the manager would, “Take any opportunity to get the knife in” when Cindy was at her most defenceless. The knife metaphor has been associated with persecution and malicious victimisation (Wilkinson, 2002) and it describes an opportunistic attack that minimises the likelihood of retaliation. Cindy’s use of the knife attack metaphor reflects her experiences of being victimised, as part of her manager’s campaign to force her out of her job with no good reason. Feelings of *intimidation* and *fear* of the potential outcome of the attacks, and *bitterness* and *distrust* towards her manager emerge from Cindy’s example.

Attacks may be completely unexpected. Zoe thought her new manager was trustworthy until he changed important terms in her contract without consulting her. Zoe explained her experiences, as follows:

*[It was like] being sandbagged, like a soldier in the desert. Somebody is trying to disable you, so they hit you with a bag full of sand and it knocks you out.... It doesn't necessarily leave any obvious injuries but it's like blunt force trauma, it knocks you out; you don't see it coming and you don't hear anything.*

The description of “sandbagging” neatly encapsulated Zoe’s shock at her manager’s sudden change of behaviour. Her comment about being a soldier draws attention to her perception of herself as strong and able to fight, whilst her reference to the desert highlights the challenging nature of the work environment. However, despite her attempts to adapt to the imposed changes, her job became impossible and she became seriously unwell. Zoe described her workplace as having become: “Unsafe and dangerous” so she left the organisation once she realised it would not change. The “sandbagging” metaphor provides a vivid illustration of the *shock* and *devastation* that resulted from her manager’s unexpected behaviour and her *pain* and *distress* at being unable to resolve the situation.

Thus, the attack metaphor seems to highlight the emotions of bitterness, devastation, distress, distrust, fear, intimidation, pain, and shock. These metaphors predominantly cluster around Storm and Storm’s (1987) group 1 primary

emotions, except for fear and shock, which fit into group 2, and bitterness, which fits into group 3, as shown in table 22.

### ***6.1.1.3. Torture or punishment***

The final subset of violence metaphors contains examples of the ways interviewees used torture or punishment to describe their experiences of bullying. Similar to attacks, these metaphors describe actions that are one-way, and in situations where targets perceived they lacked the agency to use self-defence or retaliation. For example, Olga felt that her manager's verbal abuse and undermining of her was a form of punishment and she described it thus: "She would publicly crucify me". Using the metaphor of a slow and painful form of punishment reflects the *suffering* and *misery* that this mistreatment caused. Olga requested help from HR but the abuse continued. Olga went on to explain, "I loved working with the students, but I hated going to work. I was scared. I was scared of her, really, really scared". Ultimately, Olga's *fear* of her manager meant that she *dreaded* any contact and was *distrustful* of her manager.

Punishment also featured in Cindy's comments. She was concerned that if she requested help to improve her manager's behaviour it might be counter-productive, because she believed her manager had powerful allies. Cindy remarked, "I'm just going to put my head on the chopping block [if I complain]". The chopping block metaphor has been associated with the sense of exposure to dire consequences (i.e., beheading) (Wilkinson, 2002). Cindy's use of this metaphor reflected her *horror* and *fear* that her family would be homeless if she lost her job because she had no other income. Furthermore, her background story emphasised her *distrust* of organisational processes, an emotion implied in the chopping block metaphor.

In the final example, upward bullying resulted in the mobbing of Sophia by a group of more junior employees, who sent numerous negative emails about her. Sophia described her experience as being 'Stretched thin; a little bit like being on the rack'. Reference to this form of torture reflects feelings of intense *anxiety*, *torment*, and *fear*, (Wilkinson, 2002). Sophia had requested help from her manager but he ignored her. Her choice of metaphor reflects the *anxiety*, *torment*, *fear*, and *suffering* that her experiences caused.

In summary, metaphors of torture or punishment reflect emotions of anxiety, distrust, dread, fear, horror, misery, suffering, and torment. These metaphors cluster around Storm and Storm's (1987) groups 1 and 2, apart from disgust, which fits into group 3.

### *Discussion*

In this section, interviewees used metaphors of physical violence to describe how workplace bullying felt, despite their experiences being of a nonphysical nature. Previous research in this area identified a spectrum of metaphor types. In Tracy et al. (2006) metaphors ranged from mild "picking on" to more extreme forms of torture; however, in the present study all of the metaphors of violence were serious to extreme, which may be a consequence of the aggressive acts that many of the interviewees said they experienced (as discussed in section 5.4).

National culture may have influenced metaphor choices. For example, New Zealand workers are less tolerant of inequality at work (Hofstede, 1984); consequently, they may view any ill-treatment more harshly than targets from countries that are more tolerant of inequality, such as the USA where Tracy et al.'s (2006) study took place. Conversely, the expectation of equality may have encouraged these interviewees to respond to their perpetrators, despite being at a disadvantage in terms of organisational power and resources. A final expectation of equality became apparent when no-one mentioned their battles being unfair or weighted against themselves, in contrast to the findings in Tracy et al. (2006). So despite the outcomes indicating otherwise, the users of fight and battle metaphors appeared to believe that they could succeed.

Interestingly, interviewees who used metaphors of attacks, torture, and punishment were in each case describing situations that they had been unable to manage using active resistance, either by choice or by failure of the approach. Instead, these interviewees used passive resistance (for example, external support) and paradoxical resistance (for example, work-to-rule) to enable them to continue to work but they all remained fully aware of what was happening to them. In contrast, Tracy et al. (2006) found that torture and punishment simply led to the targets "tuning out" (p. 164) and feeling numb in order to tolerate their experiences; however, no one in the current study reported a similar reaction. A possible reason for this difference is that all but one of the interviewees who used

metaphors of attacks, torture, and punishment had attempted to manage their experiences by seeking help through formal channels. In doing so, they may have remained more conscious of their treatment than a person who tries to ignore it. Again, an expectation of equality may have enabled targets to maintain a focus on their mistreatment and their need to resist it. The attempts to use active resistance, and its limited efficacy, may go some way to explain the extreme types of metaphors used by interviewees.

When linking the metaphors to the ways in which interviewees resisted workplace bullying, it emerged that those who used fight and battle metaphors had perceived themselves as able to use active resistance. This perception may be because they had, or believed they had, more control over their situation and this created a potential opportunity to resolve their difficulties. On the other hand, those who spoke of attacks and torture or punishment had used passive resistance, or had used active resistance unsuccessfully then resorted to passive resistance, and consequently, their choice of metaphor suggested that they perceived they had had little control over their treatment.

Each of the interviewees who used violence metaphors provided background stories that conveyed their fear of losing their income, and these fears resulted in them describing their experiences in physically oppressive ways. Despite no one reporting actual physical violence, interviewees spoke of their emotional injuries. All eight of the interviewees in this section said they had suffered from stress-related symptoms and they all had received external support to help them recover or continue in their jobs, so it appears that these violence metaphors may have been describing emotional suffering. Despite an unusually positive outcome, Ava experienced extreme stress as consequence of her experiences and its ongoing effects were still an issue for her. These psychological responses to bullying are comparable to real wars, where the victors, as well as the vanquished, may suffer post-traumatic stress. Therefore, use of battle metaphors seems particularly fitting.

A range of emotions emerged from the metaphors of violence and targets' stories. The emotions fitted into three primary groups devised by Storm and Storm, (1987) and these are summarised in table 22. This table shows how the metaphors related to violence fit into the primary emotional groupings of (1) shame, sadness, and pain, (2) anxiety and fear, and (3) anger, hatred, and disgust.

Emotions from all three groups emerged in attacks, and torture or punishment, whilst fights and battles had emotions from groups 1 and 3. A detailed discussion of emotions appears in section 6.4.2.

Table 22

*Summary of Primary Emotions Related to Violence Metaphors*

<u>Violence metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
<u>Fights and battles</u>	powerlessness resignation unhappiness weakness weariness		aggression anger defiance offence resentment
<u>Attacks</u>	devastation distress intimidation pain	fear shock	bitterness distrust
<u>Torture or punishment</u>	fear misery suffering torment	anxiety dread fear horror	distrust

In summary, metaphors of violence reflect a range of emotions. In some cases, emotions emerged directly from the metaphor context (e.g., Ethan’s comment about the battle draining him); whilst in other cases they were discernible after the metaphors had been considered in conjunction with the background stories. The most frequently used metaphor was fights and battles, whilst emotions associated with this metaphor spread across Storm and Storm’s (1987) negative primary emotional groups. The predominant primary emotions were from groups 1 and 3. The following sections discuss the other less prominent metaphors and emotions that emerged in the course of the interviews.

### **6.1.2. Madness**

Metaphors of madness are associated with being out of control (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005). Interviewees associated metaphors of madness with behaviours that seemed strange and irrational in a professional educational environment. Four interviewees used metaphors that related to madness.

The majority of madness metaphors focused on the behaviour of others. Rona said she felt she was “In an insane asylum” after she had asked HR and her union for protection from her abusive manager but help was not forthcoming. Being in an insane asylum reflects feelings of *disturbance* and *apprehension* as the metaphor implies that other people’s behaviour makes little sense, is volatile and is hard to predict. Rona’s use of this metaphor reflects her inability to comprehend the lack of support provided for her, despite her co-workers being aware of her difficulties. She extended her description of her experiences with additional madness related metaphors, describing HR and union representatives’ behaviour as making her feel like she was, “Alice in Wonderland in the whole tea party” and “in a parallel universe” where bizarre decisions were made. The additional metaphors for the people who refused to support her suggest that Rona sees them operating in a fantasy world and this reflects her *contempt* for them. Her inability to rationalise what was happening around her, together with her choice of metaphors, may be associated with being separate from the rest of the organisation, so feelings of *isolation* and *powerlessness* also emerge.

Madness metaphors may also focus inwards. Perry provided a different perspective by explaining, “I was losing my mind”. This metaphor is synonymous with madness, and reflects feelings of *disturbance*, *distrust*, and *fear*. Being the focus of a negative campaign from subordinates that his manager encouraged, and being unable to get any formal support from HR, were outside Perry’s experience. His inability to comprehend the situation resulted in him questioning his interpretations of what was happening. In this case, the madness metaphor indicates that Perry thought he was losing control, and suggests additional feelings of *powerlessness* and *despair*.

Table 23  
*Emotions Associated with Madness Metaphors*

<u>Madness metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	despair	apprehension	contempt
	isolation	disturbance	distrust
	powerlessness	fear	

Overall, metaphors of madness reflected the emotions of *apprehension*, *contempt*, *despair*, *distrust*, *disturbance*, *fear*, *isolation*, and *powerlessness*. These

feelings relate to all of the primary groups of negative emotions (Storm & Storm, 1987), as shown in table 23.

Although metaphors of madness may be associated with several unpleasant emotions, their use might sometimes have had a positive dimension. Section 5.7.1. highlighted the ways in which HR workers sometimes reframed targets experiences in ways that worked against targets' interests. However, in this context, targets' use of madness metaphors for reframing perpetrators' behaviours may have allowed them to rationalise the actions as uncontrollable, but ultimately not their own fault. Reframing perpetrators in this way may have helped targets cope better with their abusive environments.

### **6.1.3. Natural forces**

Metaphors of natural forces are associated with environmental elements that are usually uncontrollable and may cause disasters. Four interviewees used different metaphors of natural forces. For example, when Ngaire's dean unexpectedly directed his fury at her and said he was going to dismiss her, Ngaire described herself as being "In the midst of a storm" and "In a tornado being whipped around". Metaphors of storms have been linked with feelings of *chaos*, *terror*, and ultimately *fear* that any damaging effects may be permanent (Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon, & Chandler, 2002). Ngaire explained that she had an excellent work record, so she was unprepared for this situation; furthermore, losing her job would seriously damage her career. Ngaire's use of the storm and tornado metaphors reflects *shock* and *horror* at her treatment. The metaphors also reflect the *devastation* that would occur if she was unable to find suitable alternative employment and the change became permanent. Overall, the metaphor and background story suggest feelings of *powerlessness* in the face of a greater, uncontrollable force.

The sea featured in another interviewee's description of her experiences. Cindy spoke of how she had considered asking HR for help to prevent her manager abusing her, but she abandoned this idea because she thought she would create additional difficulties for herself. Cindy explained the situation as follows: "You're sitting in the boat and the waves are getting pretty high and lapping the sides, do you rock it more? If I was going to rock it, things would get worse". Waves may be viewed as obstacles to life's journey (Herlofsky, 2003). In Cindy's

case, the waves metaphor highlights her *distrust* and *fear* of the organisational processes that she saw as presenting obstacles to the resolution of her difficulties. To emphasise her predicament, she added, “You think you’re about to lose your job, and your house; and your whole world is going to fall in”. The further comments, combined with the use of this metaphor, suggest that Cindy was *terrified* of the changes that could occur to her life.

Table 24  
*Emotions Associated with Natural Forces Metaphors*

<u>Natural forces metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	devastation	fear	distrust
	powerlessness	horror shock terror	

Metaphors of natural forces evoked emotions of devastation, distrust, fear, horror, powerlessness, shock, and terror. Table 24 illustrates the way in which the emergent emotions relate to Storm and Storm’s (1987) primary groups. The predominant emotions associated with natural forces metaphors were associated with the primary group of anxiety and fear, which is unsurprising as they emerged from descriptions of dangerous, uncontrollable events.

#### **6.1.4. Water**

The wave metaphor mentioned in the previous section invokes water imagery. Four other interviewees used metaphors involving immersion in water to explain how they felt about their experiences. For example, Rona spoke of being a target and witnessing the abuse of other staff members. She said she felt unable to help them because “You’ve fallen off the Titanic and everyone is drowning but you can’t save them either, because you’re in a similar situation”. The metaphor of falling into water and potentially drowning, or freezing to death, can be associated with *terror* and *suffering*, whilst the inability to rescue oneself and others reflects feelings of *powerlessness*, *despair*, *devastation*, and *misery*.

Uma provided a more unusual metaphor. When she was unable to complete the exceptionally high workload set by her manager, Uma asked for help, but HR and her manager ignored her requests. Uma explained how the

situation had affected her: “It’s like you’ve been in a washing machine, and been thrashed around, and had everything sucked out of you”. The metaphor provides a vivid image of being *powerless* to prevent the difficulties and being *drained* by a greater force. Furthermore, the persistence of the situation--trapped in a washing cycle--could also link to feelings of *hopelessness*.

Metaphors of water evoked emotions of despair, devastation, drained, hopelessness, misery, powerlessness, terror, and suffering. Table 25 shows how the emergent emotions relate to Storm and Storm’s (1987) primary groups.

Table 25  
*Emotions Associated with Water Metaphors*

<u>Water metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	despair		
	devastation	terror	
	drained		
	hopelessness		
	misery		
	powerlessness		
	suffering		

The majority of these emotions fit into group 1. This clustering in group 1, and the emergent emotions, appears to emphasise the lack of control inherent in the stories and metaphors. Group 1 emotions have an inward focus and they highlight the targets’ negative feelings about themselves, rather than any outward emotions towards the perpetrators, perhaps because any attempts at self-defence appear futile.

### **6.1.5. Desert island**

As discussed in section 3.4.2., desert islands have long been associated with isolation (Lape, 2004) and shortages of resources. Three interviewees, including Perry, whose story was analysed in-depth in section 3.4.2, spoke of desert islands to explain their experiences of bullying. For example, Gerry said, “I was standing in the middle of a desert island”. Use of the island metaphor in this context may be associated with feelings of *loneliness* and *isolation*. Gerry explained that his colleagues agreed to support him when he confronted his abusive manager, but when the time came they reneged on their promise. He developed the metaphor to reflect this experience by adding, “There are all these other people out in the water

swimming away from me”. By considering the metaphor and the background story together, the additional emotions of *abandonment* and *rejection* emerge to reflect Gerry’s treatment by his colleagues.

Rona also used the metaphor of an island was to describe how she felt when she could not get help to manage her problems, she explained: “I was on an island by myself.... [And] every so often I could take a canoe to the mainland but I was always turned back”. Again, the island metaphor can be associated with *loneliness* and *isolation*, whilst the absence of help from managers, HR, and unions in this story also links with *abandonment* and *rejection*. Furthermore, as Rona repeatedly thought she was close to escaping her difficulties but ultimately she failed, this additional dimension infers emotions of *frustration* and *bitterness*.

As discussed earlier, exclusion or rejection from a group is a particularly powerful form of oppression and is one that society uses to control deviant behaviour. However, exclusion is usually a punishment reserved for wrongdoers, and as all interviewees in this section saw themselves as innocent parties, the metaphor may also reflect feelings of *misery* and *despair*.

Overall, feelings of abandonment, bitterness, despair, frustration, isolation, loneliness, misery, and rejection emerge from the desert island metaphor. The emergent emotions relate to the Storm and Storm’s (1987) primary groups, as shown in table 26.

Table 26  
*Emotions Associated with Desert Islands Metaphors*

<u>Desert islands metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	abandonment <sup>a</sup>		bitterness
	despair		frustration
	isolation		
	loneliness		
	misery		
	rejection		

<sup>a</sup> Treated as synonymous with rejected and neglected in this study

The emotions that emerged from these metaphors predominantly fit into the primary emotions of shame, sadness, and pain (Storm & Storm, 1987), which also suggests that the interviewees were experiencing considerable levels of distress.

### 6.1.6. Games

Although games may appear to be childish or trivial, they may also be associated with the use of manipulation, deception, and strategy. Consequently, scholars have argued that using metaphors of war games in the workplace indicates a struggle for intellectual dominance (Martin & Frost, 1999). Three interviewees used metaphors of games. For example, Xanthe described how she felt that she had to outwit her colleagues to be able to carry out her job. However, she was uncertain of which strategy to use, she explained: “I wasn't quite sure what kind of game I was in, so there was a bit of chess and a little bit of poker and there was a little bit of pushing your submarines over into the Atlantic Ocean in the game of Battleships”. This metaphor suggests that Xanthe was using her skills of *cunning* and *scheming*--terms that Storm and Storm (1987) associate with negative emotions--to deal with her situation. Feelings of *suspiciousness* also emerged from this metaphor and these fitted with Xanthe's description of her approach to her job. Xanthe expanded her story by adding, “Even though I enjoyed the intellectual scrapping and not appearing afraid, I was very afraid”. Xanthe was concerned that her job, and consequently her home, would be at risk if her colleagues gained the upper hand, this supplementary information suggests feelings of *apprehension* and *fear*.

Tiffany used the game metaphor to describe her colleagues' attempts to undermine her after she had complained about a co-worker's behaviour; she explained, “They're trying to actually put me in my place and turn me into a basic secretary, and that's just their little game. The behaviour is so juvenile it is unbelievable”. Use of the game metaphor in this context, initially reflects *defiance* and *scorn* at the colleagues' unprofessional behaviour. However, Tiffany also remarked, “When it continues on a regular basis it actually becomes very upsetting”. This further comment suggests that games can also be a source of *worry*, *fear*, and *misery*. It also shows that the games metaphor is not relating to trivial “children's games” but instead to serious games that have the potential for major harm and damage.

Similar to metaphors of battles, metaphors of games share the implication that there is the opportunity to participate, or retaliate, and win. Equally, the metaphors of games and battles also suggest disadvantage. Whilst users of battle

metaphors typically had less power and fewer resources to support themselves, the games examples indicated that targets did not know the rules, or they were merely a pawn in someone else’s game, leaving them at a disadvantage to their opposition. However, overall games and battles appear to be similar in terms of agency.

Feelings of apprehension, cunning, defiance, fear, misery, scheming, scorn, suspiciousness, and worry emerge from the games metaphor. Table 27 shows the emergent emotions that relate to Storm and Storm’s (1987) primary groups.

Table 27  
*Emotions Associated with Games Metaphors*

<u>Games metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	misery		cunning
	worry		defiance
		apprehension	scheming
		fear	scorn
			suspiciousness

From metaphors of games, the emergent emotions are predominantly associated with the primary emotions of anger, hatred, and disgust (Storm & Storm, 1987). These emotions suggest that, whilst not in control of their situations, interviewees considered that they had sufficient agency to enable them to continue to resist their abusers.

### **6.1.7. Hell**

This final section of experience metaphors discusses the metaphor of hell. This metaphor is used regularly in ordinary language and therefore might be viewed as a dead metaphor, because it lacks its original meaning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980); however, when used in the context of bullying experiences stories, it regained its resonance. Two interviewees used the metaphor of hell and both described their experiences simply. When Gerry explained how his manager’s behaviour had affected the atmosphere at work negatively, he remarked, “It has been *hell*”, whilst Ethan described how constant teasing and abuse from his colleagues, thus, “They made my life *hell* for two years”. Both men emphasised

the word in their descriptions. Hell may be associated with being a place of extreme suffering. It is somewhere to avoid, where all comfort, peace, goodwill is lost, and instead there is physical torment and misery, which results in alienation, disaffection, and isolation (Höpfl, 2005). Therefore, use of the hell metaphor reflects feelings of *dread*, *fear*, *pain*, and *torment*. Both interviewees had explained how their employers had sequestered their attempts at active resistance, so their choice of metaphor may also suggest feelings of *rejection* and *isolation*.

Feelings of dread, fear, isolation, pain, rejection, and torment emerge from the hell metaphor. Table 28 shows how the emotions relate to the Storm and Storm's (1987) primary groups.

Table 28  
*Emotions Associated with Hell Metaphors*

<u>Hell</u> <u>metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	isolation	dread	
	pain	fear	
	rejection		
	torment		

The emotions from hell metaphors predominantly fit into the primary emotion group of shame, sadness, and pain (Storm & Storm, 1987) and to a lesser extent anxiety and fear.

To conclude the experiences section of this chapter, in summary, interviewees provided a variety of metaphors that described how bullying felt for them. The examples clustered under themes of violence, madness, natural forces, water, desert islands, games, and hell. Analysis of these metaphors produced a range of emotions that fit within the primary groups of (1) shame, sadness, and pain, (2) anxiety and fear, and (3) anger, hatred, and disgust (Storm & Storm, 1987). Section 6.4.2 of this chapter discusses these emotions in more detail. The next section presents metaphors of perpetrators.

## **6.2. Metaphors of perpetrators**

Eight interviewees used metaphors to describe the people they saw as the perpetrators of their bullying experiences. The analysis of perpetrator metaphors

follows a similar format to the preceding section. Four themes, *duplicity*, *dangerous animals*, *explosions*, and *other* metaphors emerged.

### 6.2.1. Duplicity

Duplicity is associated with behaving in different ways with different people in order to deceive. Three of the interviewees used metaphors that linked with duplicity. For example, Olga said she had been unable to gain help to stop her manager abusing her because the manager would behave well when witnesses were present. Olga explained her difficulties, as follows: “People didn’t believe me, because they never experienced it; but when they experienced it then *man* [her emphasis] they became firm believers; because she’s a Jekyll and Hyde”. Typically, a Jekyll and Hyde character is someone with two distinct sides to their personality, which results in them that alternating between phases of good and unpleasant behaviour. The emotions associated with this form of duplicity are *distrust* and *suspicion*, because targets do not know what to believe or expect. In addition, *resentment* at being treated unpleasantly, especially when co-workers are treated well, plus *dread* and *apprehension* emerge.

Ethan provided an alternative reference to duplicity. He explained that a senior manager had said he would help Ethan to manage his abusive supervisor but this help did not transpire, he explained, “It ended up that he didn’t do a damn thing, you know; he was just being two-faced”. Ethan believed he had been deliberately deceived. His use of the term two faced reflects feelings of *indignation*, *bitterness*, and *resentment* at this treatment. Ultimately, Ethan concluded that this manager was also a perpetrator and Ethan viewed him as being responsible for the prevailing negative environment.

Table 29  
*Emotions Associated with Duplicity Metaphors*

<u>Duplicity metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
		apprehension	bitterness
		dread	distrust
			indignation
			resentment
			suspicion

Duplicity on the part of perpetrators compounded targets’ problems because observers saw only one side of the situation, usually when the perpetrator

was behaving well, and consequently they were less likely to understand the difficulties from the target's perspective.

Feelings of apprehension, bitterness, distrust, dread, indignation, resentment, and suspicion emerge from the duplicity metaphor. Table 29 shows how the emergent emotions fit into Storm and Storm's (1987) primary groups. The emotions are predominantly associated with the primary group of anger, hatred, and disgust (Storm & Storm, 1987). The grouping of the emotions is unsurprising as targets vented their feelings about, and towards, their perpetrators, and away from their selves.

### **6.2.2. Dangerous animals**

Animals evoke a range of emotions, both positive and negative; however, a key feature of some animals is their danger to people. Two targets described their managers using metaphors of dangerous animals. For example, Cindy said her manager tried to make her leave her job after Cindy had been injured in an accident; she explained: "I felt like she was like a lion sitting on the hill, [thinking] someone's got to go....And I was a limping antelope". The metaphor of predators and prey may be associated with feelings of *intimidation*, *nervousness*, and *fear* in the face of a greater force (i.e., when confronted by a lion), and feelings of *powerlessness* from being in a naturally weaker and/or weakened state.

Denny used a better-known metaphor when she described her new manager's aggressive manner as "Like a bull in a china shop". This metaphor is associated with aggressive and clumsy behaviour (Ammer, 1997). The context of Denny's background story included her manager shouting at her in public and denying her the resources she needed to do her job. The metaphor suggests emotions of *nervousness* and *intimidation*, as this behaviour may be damaging and unpredictable. Denny explained that her manager had a history of difficult relationships, both at work and personally. Therefore, her use of the bull metaphor in this context also suggests *contempt* and *scorn* for the manager's lack of social skills.

Table 30

*Emotions Associated with Dangerous Animal Metaphors*

<u>Dangerous animals metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain intimidation powerlessness	Anxiety and fear fear nervousness	Anger, hatred, disgust contempt scorn

Feelings of contempt, fear, intimidation, nervousness, powerlessness, and scorn emerge from the dangerous animals' metaphor. Table 30 shows how the emergent emotions relate to the Storm and Storm's (1987) primary groups. In both examples, the terms fitted across the three primary emotional groups (Storm & Storm, 1987), indicating feelings that are directed both inwardly and towards the perpetrators.

### 6.2.3. Explosions

Some targets used metaphors of explosions to describe the behaviours of their perpetrators. Similar to natural forces, explosions are associated with frightening, dangerous events that may be hard to avoid. For example, Rona said she experienced verbal abuse and when this occurred, her manager was "A volcano erupting" because his behaviour was sudden and forceful, and she felt it was difficult for her to escape. Rona supplemented this metaphor by saying it was "Like when you take a bottle of champagne and you really shake it up, and the cork flies out". Ngairé provided a similar description of her manager's behaviour. She when her manager lost his temper it was "Just like a balloon popping. He just saw red and had terrible anger management problems". The metaphors of a volcano, champagne bottle, and a popping balloon involve explosiveness that suggests unpredictable destructive forces and power. Emotions that emerge from these metaphors include *shock* at the force, *fear* and *apprehension* of the outcome, *misery* and *torment* associated with not knowing what when it will happen, and finally, *powerlessness* to prevent the occurrence and defend oneself. Table 31 shows how the emergent emotions relate to the Storm and Storm's (1987) primary groups.

Table 31

### *Emotions Associated with Explosions Metaphors*

<u>Explosions metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	misery	apprehension	
	powerlessness	fear	
	torment	shock	

In both examples, the emotions fitted into the primary emotional groups 1 and 2 (Storm & Storm, 1987). No emotional terms related to the primary groups of hatred, anger, and disgust emerged, possibly because the behaviour appeared to be beyond anyone's control; that is, there was little point in wasting energy on an unstoppable force.

#### **6.2.4. Other metaphors**

Finally, metaphors of a waterfall and a bad witch described an abusive manager. Taking these metaphors individually, waterfalls may be associated with power, force, and danger, and are stretches of water to avoid at all costs (Mayer, 2004). Xanthe said of her new manager: "She was like a waterfall [and] I felt like a leaf that was being pushed along". The metaphors of the forceful waterfall and the powerless leaf provide a vivid picture of an unstoppable natural force. When these metaphors are linked with Xanthe's background story of her manager requiring her to implement decisions that damaged the organisation, and her concern that she would lose her job if she did not comply; emotions of *fear*, *panic*, and *intimidation* emerge. These feelings relate to the primary groups of (1) shame, sadness, and pain and (2) anxiety and fear (Storm & Storm, 1987), as shown in table 32.

Subsequently, Xanthe reflected on her manager's behaviour and said, "I just began to see her as a bad witch". Witches are malevolent practitioners in league with the devil (Carpenter, 1996). This second choice of metaphor reflected Xanthe's view that her manager was a vindictive person intent on creating difficulties for those who were out of favour. Consequently, feelings of *distrust*, *bitterness*, *apprehension*, and *hate* emerged. These feelings relate to primary groups 2 and 3 (Storm & Storm, 1987).

Table 32 illustrates the way in which Xanthe's metaphors moved from her being fearful of her manager to her viewing her manager in a derogatory fashion.

The negative emotions change from being inwardly focused, and therefore blaming herself, to being directed at the manager instead.

Table 32  
*Emotions Associated with Other Metaphors*

<u>Other metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
<u>Waterfall</u>	intimidation	fear panic	
<u>Bad witch</u>		apprehension	distrust bitterness hate

In summary, this section has presented a range of metaphors of perpetrators that fit into the themes of duplicity, dangerous animals and explosions, and others. These metaphors evoked a range of negative emotions, often towards the perpetrator but sometimes reflecting targets' feelings about themselves. The final section concentrates on how targets saw their role in the process, and thus presents metaphors of targets and the associated emotions.

### **6.3. Metaphors of targets**

This final section considers the metaphors that interviewees used to describe what it felt like to be a target of bullying. Nine interviewees used target metaphors. These metaphors fitted into three themes: (1) children, (2) weak creatures, and (3) leaves.

#### **6.3.1. Children**

Children may be associated with powerlessness because they lack the mental and physical capabilities of adults; consequently, they are dependent on others (Aasgaard, 2008). Five interviewees said the behaviour of their perpetrators made them feel like children. For example, HR worker Gloria challenged a colleague who treated her aggressively. The colleague then complained to the CEO about Gloria, who was called to see the CEO and taken to task for her behaviour; she explained, "I felt like I was a naughty schoolgirl really, hauled into the principal's office". Gloria blushed and looked uncomfortable as she described what had happened, and it was clear from her behaviour in the interview that the discomfort

caused by the incident still lingered. Use of the schoolgirl metaphor suggests emotions of *powerlessness*, and *intimidation* when confronted with the more powerful head of the organisation, and *embarrassment* and *humiliation* at being in this position. The use of the word naughty hints at feeling *inferior*, because this word tends to describe children’s behaviour.

Punishment featured in one of the child-related metaphors. When his manager had ordered him out of the room in front of his colleagues, Gerry said he felt like “I was some schoolboy he [the manager] was telling off, and he was about to give a good clip [slap] around the ears”. Gerry had explained that negative behaviour, such as aggressive physical gestures and threats of violence, frequently occurred in his workplace, so he had reason to believe he might be attacked; he said, “I thought he [the manager] might give me a good walloping [beating]”. Use of the schoolboy metaphor captures a sense of rough play and an imbalance of power with a bigger boy (the manager) picking on the smaller boy (Gerry). Emotions of *fear* of the potential violence, *humiliation* and *inferiority* at being mistreated in front of colleagues, and *intimidation* and *powerlessness* in the face of a greater force all emerge.

Table 33  
*Emotions Associated with Children Metaphors*

<u>Children metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	embarrassment		
	humiliation		
	inferiority		
	intimidation	fear	
	powerlessness		

Metaphors of children were associated with feelings of embarrassment, fear, humiliation, inferiority, intimidation, and powerlessness. Table 33 shows these feelings predominantly fit into primary emotional group 1 (Storm & Storm, 1987), and this grouping emphasises the shame, sadness, and pain that being belittled in this way can cause.

### **6.3.2. Weak creatures**

The second way in which interviewees described themselves was as weak creatures. As noted section 6.2.2., the use of animals as a metaphor for

perpetrators suggested danger. However, the creatures used in target metaphors were vulnerable in some way. For example, Cindy described her manager as a lion who was watching from a hill (as discussed in section 6.2.2.), she went on to explain how she saw herself: “I was one of the animals running around and [the manager thought] “There’s a weak one, I’ll have that one”....and I was a limping antelope”. The choice of metaphor illustrates Cindy’s belief her manager was planning to remove her from the workplace because she had been temporarily incapacitated. Use of the metaphor of a weakened animal in this context suggests feelings of *vulnerability* and *powerlessness* when compared with the stronger animal, whilst seeing oneself as prey that is likely to be eaten may result in feelings of *fear*, *intimidation*, and *apprehension*.

In a different example, Sophia described being a target of upward bullying and not being able to get help to resolve the issues. To emphasise her feelings at the time, she explained: “I really felt quite pinned, like a butterfly that is having its wings stretched out; not quite being chloroformed but certainly having it coming closer”. The metaphor of a captured butterfly suggests feelings of fragility or *weakness* and *powerlessness*. The additional reference to chloroform coming closer evokes feelings of *apprehension*, *fear*, and *dread*

Table 34  
*Emotions Associated with Weak Creatures Metaphors*

<u>Weak creatures metaphors</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	intimidation	apprehension	
	powerlessness	dread	
	weakness	fear	
	vulnerability <sup>a</sup>		

<sup>a</sup>Treated as synonymous with inferior

Table 34 shows that the feelings fit predominantly into primary emotional groups 1 and 2 (Storm & Storm, 1987). Metaphors of weakened creatures were associated with feelings of apprehension, dread, fear, intimidation, powerlessness, weakness, and vulnerability.

### **6.3.3. Leaves**

Finally, as mentioned in the perpetrators section, Xanthe was fearful of her manager, whom she described as a waterfall and she added, “I felt like a leaf being pushed along”. The metaphor of a leaf conveys feelings of weakness because leaves may be associated with being insignificant, easily pushed or blown-away, and ultimately being something disposable. Emotions associated with the use of the leaf metaphor include *inferiority* and *powerlessness*. This metaphor reflects Xanthe’s story of being unable to resist her manager’s greater force because she was scared of losing her job if she did, even though she thought her manager did not have the best interests of the organisation in mind. These emotions fit into Storm and Storm’s (1987) primary emotion group of shame, sadness, and fear.

In summary, in this section interviewees provided three types of metaphors--children, weak creatures, and leaves--to describe how they felt as targets of bullying. These metaphors mainly reflect feelings of intimidation, powerlessness, and general vulnerability in the face of perceived greater powers, plus fear and dread of potential outcomes. These feelings link to two of the three primary emotional groups and they emphasise targets’ personal, inwardly focused emotions. Feelings related to the primary emotions of anger, hatred, and disgust did not emerge, possibly because they require strength and effort to use, and the metaphors suggested that targets felt they did not have these internal resources available to them. Overall, the metaphors provided a succinct way of communicating the interviewees’ feelings about themselves as targets.

## **6.4. Metaphors and emotions**

The preceding sections presented examples of targets’ metaphors of experiences, perpetrators, themselves as targets, and the emotions these metaphors reflect. The current section discusses these findings and compares them with extant literature.

### **6.4.1. Metaphors**

The majority of metaphors emerged naturally in the course of the interviews, and targets used them to illustrate and emphasise their views. Thematic analysis of the interviews identified metaphors that were then organised into thematic groups.

Using the style of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1997), the list below summarises the range of metaphors that targets used to describe bullying:

Experiences of bullying are:

- Violence - battles, fights and torture
- Madness - an insane asylum, parallel universe
- Natural force - storm, waves
- Water - drowning, waterfall
- Desert island – isolation, banishment
- Games - poker, battleships, chess
- Hell

Perpetrators are:

- Duplicitous - two-faced, Jekyll and Hyde
- Dangerous animals – hungry lion, angry bull
- Explosive – active volcano, champagne bottles, popping balloons
- Other – waterfalls, bad witches

Targets are:

- Weak creatures
- Children
- Leaves

The list of metaphors indicates that power, danger, and unpredictability are very prominent. That is, it paints a picture of powerful, dangerous, and unpredictable bullies and powerless, vulnerable targets.

Several targets continued with their metaphors throughout their stories, suggesting that they had given their metaphor choices some consideration or, upon using the metaphor, found it continually useful to convey and frame their experience. This observation is similar to that made by Sheehan et al. (2004), where, despite the difficulties the researchers encountered when they requested metaphors, they went on to note that:

*The level of insight demonstrated [by the metaphors chosen] suggests that victims had engaged in a relatively high degree of reflection on the bullying episode. This degree of reflection in turn suggests that incidences of workplace bullying are significant events in the lives of bullying victims (p. 30).*

Targets' choices of experience metaphors appeared to vary according to their resistance strategies. For example, targets used metaphors of battles when they perceived they had an opportunity to rectify their situation using active resistance. Similarly, targets who had negative experiences of active resistance, as a result of organisational sequestering, or who felt they were constrained and could only use passive or paradoxical forms of resistance, used metaphors that related to punishment, isolation, water, natural forces, games, and hell, which suggests that they perceived that they lacked agency and were in uncontrollable, dangerous situations.

Table 35  
*Comparison of Metaphor Findings*

Tracy et al, (2006)	Current study <sup>a</sup>
<u>Bullying Process as:</u>	<u>Experience</u>
Game or Battle <sup>(i) b</sup>	Violence - including battles <sup>(i)</sup>
Nightmare	Madness
Water torture	Natural forces
Noxious substance	Desert Islands
	Immersed in water
	Games <sup>(i)</sup>
	Hell
<u>The bully as:</u>	<u>Perpetrator</u>
Two-faced actor <sup>(ii)</sup>	Duplicitous <sup>(ii)</sup>
Evil or demon - witches, Jekyll and Hyde <sup>(iii)</sup>	Bad witch <sup>(iii)</sup>
Narcissistic dictator or royalty	Dangerous animal
	Explosive
	Waterfall
<u>The target as:</u>	<u>Target</u>
Slave or Animal <sup>(iv)</sup>	Weak creature <sup>(iv)</sup>
Child <sup>(v)</sup>	Child <sup>(v)</sup>
Prisoner	Leaves
Heartbroken lover	

*Note.* Roman numerals indicate similar metaphors. That is, <sup>(i)</sup> in one column aligns with <sup>(i)</sup> in the other column and this continues with the remaining numerals.

<sup>a</sup> Listed in descending order of prevalence for current study

<sup>b</sup> Noted as most prevalent but other frequencies were not reported

The current study has produced a slightly broader range of metaphors compared to a similar study (Tracy et al., 2006). Table 35 provides a comparison of the outcomes of both studies. Five similarities emerged and these are marked *i*

through to  $v$  in the table. The current study identified eight new or different metaphors. Six metaphors from the original study did not emerge.

Individual and cultural variations may have contributed to the use of different metaphors. With the exception of the more familiar metaphors of madness and hell, those from the current study may have been influenced by aspects of interviewees' lived experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In particular, the natural environment features strongly in metaphors from the current study. As previously noted, New Zealand is a group of islands located in the South Pacific ocean, so being surrounded by water is normal for those who live there. The country experiences regular earthquakes and there are active volcanos, so inhabitants tend to be familiar with the effects of natural forces. Furthermore, inhabitants also experience geographic isolation. It appears that these geographic factors have been reflected in targets' metaphor choices. Of course the USA, where Tracy et al. carried out their 2006 study, also has an extensive environment that is subject to earthquakes and other natural events, but the country is considerably larger and more geographically diverse, with huge urban areas that are absent from New Zealand, so inhabitants of the USA may have had quite different life experiences to those from New Zealand. Furthermore, the references to prisoners, water torture, and dictators from USA participants may have been a reflection of contemporary current affairs and these descriptions were unlikely to be relevant in New Zealand. The emergent metaphors of perpetrators (as dangerous animals, volcanoes, and waterfalls) and the target (as leaves) also reflect aspects of the natural environment, so it appears there is a common theme in targets' metaphor choices.

The different metaphors produced by the current study, compared to the earlier study, are worthy of consideration. Although the reasons for the disparity are unclear, the data collection and analysis methods may provide an explanation. Tracy et al. (2006) used a combination of focus groups, drawing, and interviews for data collection, whilst the current study is a collection of mainly naturally occurring metaphors from interviews only. It is possible that the interviewees in the focus groups were influenced by each other (Zorn, Roper, Weaver, & Broadfoot, 2004); consequently, they may have limited their ideas to fit and develop those of other group members. Another possibility is that workers in the New Zealand higher education sector had more experience of using metaphors

than the those from a mix of industries, and this resulted in them giving more imaginative responses. Finally the approaches to coding in the studies and differing schema may well have influenced the range of metaphors identified.

Contributions to knowledge emerge from this research in several ways. From a comparison with the literature, it was apparent that the use of metaphors of violence and games for experiences, duplicity and bad witch for perpetrators, and children and weak creatures for targets, are broadly consistent with the findings of Tracy et al. (2006). However, the identification of the generative metaphors of the natural environment to describe bullying makes a small contribution to the literature. The study also contributes metaphors of desert islands, water, and hell for experiences; whilst perpetrators are: dangerous animals, explosive, and waterfalls. One additional metaphor, leaves, emerged for targets. Finally, identification of the link between the perceived opportunities for resistance and the metaphor chosen, may provide guidance for those investigating bullying, This link may also be useful when counselling targets in order to assist them with reframing their experiences. These metaphors provide an important insight into the emotions associated with bullying. Therefore, the next section discusses the emotions that emerged from the metaphors.

#### **6.4.2. Emotions**

The metaphors identified in this study reflected a range of emotions. These emotions emerged using Steger's 3-stage process, as explained in section 3.4.2. Briefly, this process involved an analysis of the metaphors and background stories provided by targets, with reference to the metaphor literature where possible, to identify emotions. The emotions were then arranged into the primary groups proposed by Storm and Storm (1987). Tables 36 to 38 list the metaphor themes identified in this study.

In total, interviewees in the current study used 61 metaphors and this chapter reviewed a selection of them. The emergent emotions clustered around the primary emotional groups of (1) shame, sadness, and pain ( $n = 54$ ). The most frequently emerging emotions are inwardly focused, that is they reflect targets feelings about themselves, and this finding may help to explain why targets find bullying so difficult to bear. A smaller number of emotional terms fitted into the remaining groups of (2) anxiety and fear ( $n = 31$ ) and (3) anger, hatred, and

disgust ( $n = 28$ ). These terms include inwardly focused emotions (group 2) and those directed outwardly at others, such as anger towards perpetrators (group 3). So overall, the majority of emotions associated with bullying appear to result in targets experiencing negative emotions that focused inwardly and make them feel bad about themselves (e.g., shame).

It is important to note that the frequency of the emotions does not necessarily convey their strength, and less frequent emotions could be equally or more powerful when considered in the overall context of the stories. Furthermore, the emotions selected in this study are not exhaustive, as many terms are similar and researchers with different backgrounds may have made other choices; however, the terms selected here seemed most appropriate when considered in conjunction with the associated background stories.

Comparing the results of the current study with those of Sheehan et al. (2004) and Tracy et al. (2006) presented a challenge, despite the aims of the studies being the same. Unlike surveys, where the items are the same, the metaphor studies used different methods and approaches, which made comparisons difficult. As the earlier studies did not report the processes used to identify emotions, the ways in which the emotions emerged from the metaphors is unclear. However, regardless of the formulation of the results, both studies referred to several different emotions, and these provide a basis for comparison with the current study.

There are similarities in the three studies that suggest targets may experience certain emotions universally. Many of the emotions identified by Tracy et al. (2006), including betrayal, defensive, exhausted (synonymous with drained); isolation, loneliness, pain, and sadness, relate to the primary group of shame, sadness, and pain (Storm & Storm, 1987). Although Sheehan et al. (2004) reported emotion labels or terms that did not neatly fit into the primary groups, those noted appeared to be synonymous with existing terms, for example feeling inconsequential, unimportant, and vulnerable are similar to being misunderstood, rejected, and defensive. Again, these emotions relate to the primary group of shame, sadness, and pain (Storm & Storm, 1987). As the majority of terms in the current study also relate to shame, sadness, and pain (Storm & Storm, 1987), there appears to be a strong argument for proposing that these feelings are likely to be universal.

Table 36 *Metaphor Themes and Emotions – Experiences*

<u>Metaphors</u>	<u>Sub themes</u>	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
	<u>Violence</u>	powerlessness		aggression
	<u>and</u>	resignation		anger
	<u>Battles</u>	unhappiness		defiance
		weakness		offence
		weariness		resentment
	<u>Attacks</u>	devastation	fear	bitterness
		distress	shock	distrust
		intimidation		
		pain		
	<u>Torture</u>	fear	anxiety	distrust
	<u>or</u>	misery	dread	
	<u>punishment</u>	suffering	fear	
		torment	horror	
	<u>Madness</u>	despair	apprehension	contempt
		isolation	disturbance	distrust
		powerlessness	fear	
	<u>Natural</u>	devastation	fear	distrust
	<u>forces</u>	powerlessness	horror	
			shock	
			terror	
	<u>Water</u>	despair	terror	
		devastation		
		drained		
		hopelessness		
		misery		
		powerlessness		
		suffering		
	<u>Desert</u>	abandonment		bitterness
	<u>Islands</u>	despair		frustration
		isolation		
		loneliness		
		misery		
		rejection		
	<u>Games</u>	misery	apprehension	cunning
		worry	fear	defiance
				scheming
				scorn
				suspiciousness
	<u>Hell</u>	isolation	dread	
		pain	fear	
		rejection		
		torment		

*Note.* The table shows how the emergent emotions for each experience metaphor theme relate to Storm and Storm's taxonomy (1987).

Table 37

*Metaphor Themes and Emotions - Perpetrators*

Metaphors	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
<u>Duplicity</u>		apprehension dread	bitterness distrust indignation resentment suspicion
<u>Dangerous animals</u>	intimidation powerlessness misery	fear nervousness apprehension fear	contempt scorn
<u>Explosions</u>	powerlessness torment	shock	
<u>Waterfall</u>	intimidation	fear panic	
<u>Bad witch</u>		apprehension	distrust bitterness hate

*Note.* The table shows how the emergent emotions for each perpetrator metaphor theme relate to Storm and Storm's taxonomy (1987).

Table 38

*Metaphor Themes and Emotions - Targets*

Metaphors	Shame, sadness, pain	Anxiety and fear	Anger, hatred, disgust
<u>Children</u>	embarrassment humiliation inferiority intimidation powerlessness	fear	
<u>Weak creatures</u>	intimidation powerlessness weakness vulnerability	apprehension dread fear	
<u>Leaves</u>	inferiority powerlessness		

*Note.* The table shows how the emergent emotions for each target metaphor theme relate to Storm and Storm's taxonomy (1987).

However, there are differences in the findings of the three studies, the most important being that the primary emotional group of anxiety and fear received very limited reference in the present study compared to in extant studies. Sheehan et al. (2004) identified fear, whilst Tracy et al. 2006 identified fear and dread. In the current study the use of terms related to this primary emotion group featured strongly ( $n = 31$ ), so whilst there is some similarity in the studies, any universal claim about this group of emotions is less convincing. Similarly, Tracy et al. (2006) identified anger and revenge, which relate to the primary emotional group of anger, hatred, and disgust (Storm & Storm, 1987), but Sheehan et al. (2004) made no reference to these feelings; however, in the current study a range of terms was used ( $n = 28$ ), so again there is disparity in the findings.

There are several possible explanations for the differences in the findings. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the studies used different methods for collecting data. The varying approaches may have influenced the metaphors and stories supplied, and therefore the types and extent of emotions identified. In the current study, interviewees supplied data in a confidential, empathetic, and personal environment that may well have encouraged them to speak more freely. The ways in which metaphors were analysed to identify emotions also may have influenced the results but, as extant studies did not report systematic processes, it is not possible to be conclusive. However, it may be that using Steger's systematic approach allows for a broader interpretation of metaphors. All three studies had different demographic populations, so cultural and educational variations may have influenced the data. Finally, the types of bullying targets experienced may have been different and this may provide an explanation for the variations in metaphors chosen and the emergent emotions.

This study makes a novel and important contribution to the literature through the use of a structured process, Steger's (2007) three stage metaphor analysis, to identify the emotions that result from metaphors of workplace bullying. Furthermore, grouping the emergent emotions according to Storm and Storm's (1987) taxonomy emphasises the most prominent primary emotions. It is also clear that bullying generates a wide range of negative emotions, that is, there were many instances of each of the three categories. The most frequent emotions related to the primary emotional groups of shame, sadness, and pain, which may help to explain why bullying is such a problem for targets and employers alike.

Other emotions that related to group 2 (anxiety and fear) and group 3 (anger, hatred, and disgust), emerged less frequently; however, as noted previously, the frequency of emotions did not indicate their power, so these less frequent emotions should not be disregarded when considering the overall impact of bullying.

In summary, the comparison of existing literature with the findings of the current study has shown that, although there are some similarities in the choices of metaphors used to describe aspects of bullying, there are many differences but these may be explained by data collection methods and targets' backgrounds. When comparing the emotions that emerged from the metaphors with those from earlier studies, there is limited similarity. Predominantly, the primary group of shame, sadness, and pain emerged in all three studies. However, the remaining primary groups featured strongly in the current study, but barely emerged in the comparison studies; however, the explanation for this difference might be explained by the analysis methods.

## **6.5. Chapter summary**

The purpose of this chapter has been to answer research question 3 (How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?) A range of metaphors and emotions emerged. Targets used metaphors to emphasise their experiences of bullying, and to describe both their perception of their perpetrators and themselves as targets. Generative metaphors of the natural environment featured strongly, perhaps reflecting the participants' predominant life experiences. The primary emotions of shame, sadness, and pain emerged as being applicable universally to targets of bullying, whilst a broad range of additional negative emotions also emerged from this study. These findings contribute to the metaphor and emotion literature through use of a structured approach to identify additional metaphors and universal emotions. The final chapter, Discussion and Conclusions, synthesises the qualitative and quantitative results to answer the research questions, it provides recommendations, addresses limitations, and concludes this study.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of this chapter is to synthesise the findings of the preceding chapters to achieve the goals of (1) answering the research questions and (2) making a significant contribution to existing research on workplace bullying. The chapter discusses the key findings associated with the extent, construction, and emotions of bullying. It finishes with a discussion of the implications for theory and practice, the limitations of the study, and finally, it suggests directions for future research.

To recap, the present study used two sets of data: (1) quantitative findings from a modified version of the Negative Acts Questionnaire and (2) qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews. The study began with a broad analysis of the quantitative data and then moved to an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data. Results from these data sets produced several key findings.

Key findings from the survey revealed that New Zealand ITPs have a high level of negative acts which increase the risk of workplace bullying occurring. When compared to similar studies overseas, the levels are greater than reported by European studies. Although the levels of frequencies varied across the five studies compared (including the current one), the most frequent items were broadly consistent in all studies, suggesting universality of some negative behaviours. Differences in power relationships were identified, with more bullying reported by Maori than non-Maori workers. However, women reported the same levels of bullying compared to men, whilst part-time and temporary workers reported the same or lower levels of bullying when compared to permanent and full-time workers respectively. The influence of negative acts was significant and negative towards job satisfaction but not job performance.

Key findings from the interviews include an inductively developed eight-stage, iterative process that explains the experience of bullying. This process incorporates the precipitating structures, or context, in which bullying occurs. In particular, it highlights the role of organisational restructures and new people joining the work group. The model includes targets' rationales for their selection

(i.e., standing up, standing out, and standing back) and the events that triggered bullying (i.e., conflict and debility). A broad range of abusive behaviours were incorporated into the subthemes of aggression, unfair work conditions, dishonesty, and ostracism. Constraints associated with cash, commitment, and concern influenced targets' choices of active, passive, and paradoxical resistance strategies. Managers, HR workers, and union representatives contributed to the process of bullying by sequestering, or setting aside, targets' concerns, instead of resolving them. Bullying only ended with a change in the structure of the workgroup.

Further key findings emerged from the metaphor analysis. Targets used metaphors to describe the bullying process and their choices appeared to be linked to their perception of their ability to successfully manage their experiences. Metaphors provided an insight into targets' emotional experiences and a set of primary emotions emerged as being universal to bullying. Following a structured analysis, emotions of shame, sadness, and pain emerged most prominently from targets' metaphors.

This chapter discusses the ways in which these findings answer the research questions. It also provides several potential explanations for the results. An in-depth discussion of the findings follows in the next section.

## **7.1. Discussion of key findings**

In this section, findings are discussed and synthesised both to answer the research questions and to provide explanations for these outcomes. For ease of reference, the research questions are restated here:

- 1. To what extent does workplace bullying exist in New Zealand Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs)?*
- 2. How do targets construct the process of workplace bullying?*
- 3. How do targets use metaphor to construct the emotional experience of bullying?*

The following sections discuss the extent and constructions of bullying to answer the research questions and provide rationales for the answers.

### **7.1.1. The extent of bullying**

The Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) was used to gather data. The results of this survey were compared with the results of four overseas studies to provide an indication of the relative extent of bullying. The NAQ survey indicated that New Zealand ITP workers experienced high levels of negative acts when compared to studies from Europe. Several explanations are proposed for this finding, specifically, differences in national culture, work sectors, awareness campaigns and unionisation, and finally methodological differences. To gauge the extent of bullying behaviours in ITPs, tests of the findings amongst four demographic groups followed. When combined, these results answer research question 1.

#### ***7.1.1.1. Differences in national culture***

One reason frequencies of bullying may vary across the five studies (the present study plus four comparison studies) is differences in national culture (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Therefore, cultural dimensions were considered as possible explanations for why workers in New Zealand ITPs reported greater levels of workplace bullying compared to workers in Denmark, Norway, and Turkey. Research into national culture has found that employees in different countries had different expectations about behaviour in the workplace (Hofstede, 1984, 1993). Four key dimensions were reported: *power distance*, *individualism*, *masculinity*, and *uncertainty avoidance*. These dimensions highlight specific aspects of national culture in the workplace, as follows. Power distance indicates the extent to which inequality is accepted or expected by those exposed to it, with higher scores suggesting greater acceptance. Individualism is paired with collectivism and high scores suggest that individuals expect to take care of themselves, whilst lower scores suggest group needs take priority. High scores for masculinity are associated with assertiveness and competitiveness, as opposed to the more caring and modest values indicated by low scores in this dimension. Finally, uncertainty avoidance is associated with the extent to which countries regulate to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity, with higher scores suggesting greater levels of regulation, whilst lower scores suggest more tolerance and ambiguity.

As hypothesised, New Zealand had higher NAQ results than the other countries. Cultural dimension scores for New Zealand may offer some explanation. Of the four dimensions, masculinity (58) and individualism (79) offer

potential explanations for the high levels of negative acts in these countries. Masculinity implies the existence of competitiveness and a more self-centred, uncaring culture. These elements of the dimension could provide a suitable environment for bullying to thrive (Salin, 2003b). Furthermore, New Zealand has high levels of individualism, so it might be expected that targets would be prepared to emphasise their own needs, rather than remain quiet to protect their workgroups, which may also go some way to explain the high NAQ scores for this country. Although Turkey also had relatively high levels of masculinity (45), it is still substantially lower than New Zealand, and the effects of this dimension may have been negated by lower individualism scores (37). It is possible that lower individualism may increase the likelihood of targets being unwilling to stand out from the group, so their negative experiences may remain unreported, leading to lower NAQ frequencies. The remaining European studies had lower NAQ frequencies compared with New Zealand. Both Denmark and Norway have very low scores on the masculinity dimension (16 and 8, respectively). A consequence of having a more caring environment, where there is greater concern about the quality of personal relationships (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001), appears to be much lower frequencies of negative acts. Although the Scandinavian countries also have high levels of individualism, it appears that this dimension may be masked by the feminised and egalitarian cultures of these countries (Einarsen, 2000).

Finally, Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001) proposed that a further dimension, low power distance (Denmark 18 and Norway 31), could explain the low frequencies of bullying in Scandinavia. Unfortunately, this explanation appears to be undermined by the current study, as New Zealand culture also incorporates a strong sense of equality that is reflected in it having the second lowest score on the power distance dimension (22) amongst the four countries compared; however, unlike the Scandinavian countries, it also had the highest frequencies of negative acts. Furthermore, and in contrast, Turkey had the highest power distance score (66) but low NAQ frequencies. Therefore, it appears that the power distance dimension is unlikely to explain the differences in the results. Overall, although some aspects of national culture, particularly masculinity and individualism, may provide an explanation for the high NAQ frequencies in the present study, clearly other explanations are needed.

### ***7.1.1.2. Influence of sector***

The present study not only focused on different national cultures, compared to the five comparison studies, but also on a different sector. The ITP sector is noteworthy in having the characteristics primarily of white-collar and highly educated workers. The Scandinavian studies predominantly focused on blue-collar, industrial workers and these studies had lower NAQ frequencies. Blue-collar, production workers tend to be in the advantageous position of being able to defend themselves, if they are accused of poor work, because their results are likely to be tangible, whereas white-collar workers are more reliant on interpersonal aspects of the work (for example, building good relationships with students) that are hard to “prove” (at least in the short-term), lending support to this explanation (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, & Vartia, 2003). Furthermore, blue-collar workers have more control over their time, for example having set hours to undertake production work and leave the workplace, whilst white-collar workers may be required to work more chaotic hours, which leaves them exposed to perpetrators and prevents them managing their difficulties (Zapf, Knorz, & Kulla, 1996). Other studies have found that white-collar workers, particularly in the educational and health sectors, are more likely to experience bullying (Leymann, 1996; Zapf et al., 1996), so it appears that employment sectors may go some way to explain the results.

In contrast, the Turkish study (Cemaloglu, 2007) also included white-collar, educated workers (i.e., teachers), but NAQ scores in that study were closer to those in the Scandinavian studies. Potential explanations for this apparent anomaly may be attributed to Turkey’s collectivist culture, as discussed in section 7.1.1.1, and an associated desire not to stand out as an individual by “selfishly” complaining. However, features of the work sector selected for the study may be more likely have influenced the results. Cemaloglu (2007) noted that gathering data from school teachers was difficult when school managers were present. This difficulty may have influenced the respondents, as an expectation of potentially negative responses from their managers may have led to respondents being more cautious about their answers, and thus frequencies were reduced. A slightly earlier study of white-collar worker bullying in Turkey (Bilgel et al., 2006), that included education workers, appeared to report higher frequencies than Cemaloglu (2007); unfortunately, this study did not use the NAQ, so it is not directly comparable.

However, it seems possible that special features of Cemaloglu's chosen sector may have influenced the lower frequencies. Thus, sector appears to be an important but incomplete explanation for bullying prevalence.

#### ***7.1.1.3. Bullying attention and unions***

A possible reason for the reports of high rates of bullying identified in this study is the level of attention paid to the problem in New Zealand by researchers, campaigners, and unions. Although research into workplace bullying has developed over the past twenty years, it has not been at the same pace for all countries. In the present study, results are included from Scandinavian countries, where the concept of workplace bullying has been widely researched, and from Turkey where more limited data is available. The Scandinavian data used in this study was collected a decade ago (from 1997 to 2002), whilst that from Turkey, and New Zealand, is relatively recent (2007). Consequently, the more recent results may contain an element of pent-up frustration that had not previously been aired.

A further potential reason for the high prevalence of bullying in the New Zealand ITP sector may be the absence of any national support or awareness campaigns, which, as noted in the literature review, is contrary to the situation in Europe (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, n.d.). Without awareness of the phenomenon, perpetrators may not realise that their behaviour is unacceptable. Furthermore, as organisations may sequester complaints of bullying (discussed in section 5.7) and contribute to its continuation, an absence of awareness may inadvertently contribute to this approach.

Finally, workers in Scandinavia are likely to benefit from the presence of powerful unions, whilst those in Turkey are less likely to have this type of support (Blanchflower, 2007; Visser, 2003). In New Zealand, union membership has greatly reduced in recent decades (Blanchflower, 2007; Statistics New Zealand, 2005; Visser, 2003). Although New Zealand ITP workers have unions, comments from interview participants in this study suggest that unions have minimal impact on the reduction of bullying. Interviewees reported that union representatives avoided dealing with complaints of bullying or were unable to provide appropriate support. Therefore, the absence of a strong union may explain the frequency of bullying, whilst low levels of awareness may compound the problems. Finally,

ITP unions may well be limited by the amount of New Zealand specific research and an absence of formal awareness campaigns.

#### ***7.1.1.4. Methodological differences***

Methodological differences may have influenced the outcome. As noted in section 3.2.7., there are several methodological differences in the studies used for comparison. Some of these differences may have had an impact on the results. For example, the sample size in the current study is relatively small compared to four of the five comparison studies, and it is of course possible that a larger population may have changed the findings. Second, data collection varied amongst the studies. On-line data collection occurred in the present study, whilst the other four studies used a paper-based approach. The on-line approach resulted in higher frequencies compared to the paper based approach. It is possible that the on-line data collection method gave respondents the confidence to give higher scores to the items; perhaps owing to the more anonymous nature of the collection method, or that those who were bullied were more likely to choose to participate. Third, the degree of choice in participation varied; however, as respondents in three of the four comparison studies were volunteers, like those in the current study, this factor is unlikely to have influenced the outcome. Fourth, the framing of the survey varied. The current study took steps to avoid biasing potential respondents but respondents were made aware of the subject area, whilst attempts to avoid skewing were not reported in the remaining comparison studies, so it is not possible to gauge the impact in this context fully; however it does appear likely that skewing was probably not an issue in the high frequencies. Finally, although not a methodological issue, the relative novelty of the NAQ survey may have affected the frequencies, as the study may have been used as a conduit for respondents to release some accumulated dissatisfaction, which in turn, may have influenced the results.

#### ***7.1.1.5. Item consistency***

Despite the many differences across the five studies (i.e., culture, sector, unionisation, etc.) items with the highest frequencies were broadly consistent across the studies. This finding is particularly interesting because it indicates that, despite differences in culture, sector, and other dimensions, the same negative

behaviours appear most frequently across all studies. The three most frequent forms of bullying behaviour are item 1, (Someone withholding information which affects your performance), item 4, (Being ordered to do work below your level of competence), and item 16, (Having your opinions and views ignored). This finding indicates that the problems experienced by New Zealand ITP workers may be part of global experience of bullying rather than a localised issue.

It is possible that this finding may be highlighting an underlying pattern that is common in the workplace. The prevalence of these behaviours might be associated with the ease with which they can be used and the perceived lack of risk, particularly items 1 and 16, which relate to ignoring targets or not sharing information. These acts of omission, rather than commission, are likely to be easier to explain as an accident or oversight if the perpetrator was ever questioned about them. The low risk associated with these behaviours may go some way to explain their frequency (Salin, 2003a). However, despite appearing innocuous, being ignored can be painful for targets (Williams, 2008), so its impact should not be underestimated. The prevalence of item 4 may simply be reflecting an expectation of job flexibility that may not previously have existed in the workplace. In the interviews, three targets specifically referred to being forced into lower level work, suggesting that this can be a serious issue, especially when experienced in conjunction with other negative behaviours, but more usually it is a feature of regular work life. It seems likely that this item scores highly as a result of the changing nature of the work place (Green, 2004). Finally, it must be noted that the behaviours cited most frequently may not be the most serious concerns, as the respondents were not asked to provide any weighting to their responses.

When the most frequent items are compared with the interview findings from the present study, a different picture emerges. The items fit into the themes of inequitable treatment (items 1 & 4) and ostracism (item 16). Relatively small numbers of interview targets spoke of these forms of mistreatment (7 and 6 targets, respectively), which suggests that although the three negative acts feature prominently in the survey results, they are of reduced importance when targets have an opportunity to discuss the full range of their experiences. However, their presence may be an indication of the existence of other forms of bullying.

In summary, results of the present study indicate that workers in New Zealand ITPs appear to have a significant problem compared to those in Norway, Denmark, and Turkey. However, despite the differing frequencies, the most prominent negative behaviours are the same across the studies. Lack of attention towards bullying and union support, and the influence of sector, combined with aspects of national culture, and finally the impact of methodological issues, may have influenced the frequency levels. Overall, workplace bullying is complex; therefore, multiple explanations are required (Tracy et al., 2006).

#### ***7.1.1.6. Power relationships***

After establishing the pervasiveness of negative acts, further tests explored the extent of bullying amongst several subgroups in the workplace. Based on previous literature, it was proposed that power differences would be a primary differentiator of groups that were more likely to be targeted by perpetrators (Salin, 2003b). These groups were women versus men, part-time versus full-time, temporary versus permanent, and Maori versus non-Maori workers. The rationale for selecting these four demographic groups was that they were likely to have differing levels of power (Bradley, 1999, Huq, 2004; Konrad, Prasad, & Pringle, 2006) and that groups with less power (i.e., minority groups) would be more likely to be bullied (Archer, 1999). The empirical findings indicate that only one comparison, Maori versus non-Maori, demonstrated significant differences, whilst the remaining groups had no differences in the expected direction, and two had significant differences in the opposite direction to that hypothesised. Initially, these results were surprising, as they suggest that either power differences may not be as important as anticipated or that the three groups expected to be lower in power do not in fact hold less power. Therefore, it seems likely that other factors may influence the extent to which negative acts are experienced; the following sections propose some explanations for the findings.

##### ***7.1.1.6.1. Maori versus non-Maori***

Amongst respondents in current study, Maori workers reported higher frequencies of negative acts than non-Maori. Beyond the possibility that lower power influenced the greater experience of bullying, three reasons are proposed to explain this outcome, (1) being part of a minority group, (2) lack of understanding

from managers, and (3) cultural issues amongst Maori.

Maori are part of a minority group that has special legal recognition in New Zealand. The special status of Maori workers may result in them standing out, owing to their perceived, but not necessarily real, privileges and this may be sufficient to highlight them as potential targets for bullying (Archer, 1999; Lewis & Gunn, 2007; O'Moore, et al, 1998). Furthermore, other issues that are well publicised in New Zealand, such as historical land disputes, may create a general sense of frustration that is expressed towards Maori employees in an offensive manner (Equal Employment Opportunities Trust, n.d.). Bullying in this context may be a form of racism which leads to Maori being treated in an inferior or abusive fashion compared to non-Maori workers. Consequently, Maori suffer higher frequencies of negative acts and report higher levels of self-identified bullying compared to their non-Maori peers.

An alternative explanation might be associated with the ways in which negative acts are managed. Maori may be subject to similar types and frequencies of behaviour compared with non-Maori workers but the special status of Maori results in managers, and possibly co-workers, being reluctant to intervene in potential cases of bullying. This reluctance may be associated with a fear of being seen as interfering with cultural customs or inter-tribal issues. For example, one survey respondent commented, "There is a perception that Maori can handle bullying; therefore complaints of bullying by Maori [are] seen as a non-issue". Although this comment is somewhat ambiguous, as it is not clear whether it applies to Maori targets, perpetrators or both, it does highlight a potentially important part of the bullying process. Managers may sequester problems by reframing them and thus placing them outside their remit; therefore, culture may provide a rationale for inaction. Managers' inaction may provide a low risk scenario for potential perpetrators (Salin, 2003a) that results in Maori receiving more frequent negative acts. Consequently, managers' inaction may result in situations continuing unchallenged and Maori workers experiencing more negative acts compared to their non-Maori colleagues.

Finally, Maori workers may be subject to similar types and frequencies of behaviour as non-Maori, but Maori cultural expectations or other societal norms result in such workers feeling abused and bullied, despite them being treated in the same way as other workers. Unfortunately, no one identified as Maori in the

interviews, so it is not possible to illuminate the findings any further at this stage, but the findings in this section suggest an interesting area for future studies. Overall, the results support the hypothesis that Maori workers are more likely to be bullied than non-Maori workers. However, as this was the only group to reflect the expected differences, it is likely that factors other than power are behind the results.

#### *7.1.1.6.2. Women versus men*

It was expected that women would be bullied more than men because they have relatively lower levels of power in the workplace compared to men (Bradley, 1999; Salin, 2003b). However, in this study women did not report any greater levels of negative acts or self-identified bullying than men. Two possible explanations are proposed. Firstly, New Zealand people have a greater expectation of power equality in the workplace and as a consequence men and women are less likely to be treated differently (Hofstede, 1984). Unfortunately, one aspect of this equality appears to be equal reports of bullying at work. A second explanation is that women tend to play a prominent role in the education sector, so results may have been skewed because women's prominence may have increased their relative power compared to the general workforce. Overall, it seems likely that women do not hold less power in the ITP sector in New Zealand. Although the findings were contrary to those hypothesised, they do provide empirical support for the argument that the phenomenon is not gender-specific (Adams & Crawford, 1992; Field, 1996; Needham, 2003); therefore, bullying is likely to be a potential issue for all employees.

#### *7.1.1.6.3. Part-time versus full-time workers*

Although it was anticipated that the part-time workers would indicate that they were bullied more than full-time workers, because they had less organisational power, the results showed that they experienced *less* bullying than full-time workers on two NAQ items and no other items, including self-identified bullying, were significant. Again these results indicate that either power differences are not as important as anticipated or that part-time workers may not actually hold less power.

Four explanations for the findings are proposed. First, part-time workers may simply be less visible (i.e., they are less likely to stand out) since they are not co-present with perpetrators for the same amount of time as full-time workers, giving fewer opportunities for a perpetrator to engage in repetitive behaviours. Second, they may be viewed as less of a threat, since they may have less time to engage in the politics of the organisation or challenge the perpetrator (i.e., they are less likely to stand up). Third, part-timers may place a greater focus on their time outside the organisation, where they may pursue other work or interests and thus disassociate themselves from potential bullying situations; for example, Felix explained he used the days away from his part-time ITP job to create ceramics. By focusing on his art, rather than his job, his awareness of potential negative acts appeared to have been reduced. Finally, part-time staff may view their workplace as a less significant part of their lives compared to full-time staff (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994), so any power they may have lost by being a part-time worker is balanced by the lowered significance of their work; consequently, their experience of negative acts is broadly the same as that of full-time workers.

#### *7.1.1.6.4. Temporary versus permanent contract workers*

Similar to part-time workers, the analysis showed that temporary contract workers reported significantly *less* negative behaviour, not more, on four items plus self-identified bullying, compared to only one item on which they reported significantly more negative behaviour. The lower scores for four items suggest temporary contract workers may be similar to part-timers, in that being less involved in the organisation may reduce the opportunities to attract negative attention. Consequently, less involvement may not only relate to time (i.e., part-time versus full-time) but rather an involvement or commitment component. In addition, perpetrators might view temporary workers as more likely to leave the organisation naturally at the end of their contract and see less point in singling them out for attention. Furthermore, by having a set timeframe (e.g., a one-year contract) a person with an issue with the temporary worker might simply lobby to prevent retention of the worker rather than engage in negative acts. Like part-time staff, temporary workers may avoid conflict because they have less invested in ongoing relationships at the organisation. Furthermore, they are more likely to rely on other relationships outside work for their personal identification, so

negative behaviour may have less meaning for them than for permanent staff (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994). Finally, temporary contract workers have no obligation to remain employed, so if they feel overly threatened, they may withdraw by choosing not to renew their contract. Thus they are less likely to acknowledge negative behaviour when it occurs.

Temporary workers reported a higher score than permanent contract workers on one item, "Receiving threats of violence or abuse". Two possible explanations for this higher result are that temporary workers might not automatically receive renewed contracts, so perpetrators may view them as fair game for this type of mistreatment, as they are less likely to complain. Alternatively, these temporary workers may choose to challenge the status quo and create conflict, because they have less to lose, as they may not have a continuing relationship with the workgroup. Unfortunately, no temporary staff volunteered as interviewees for this study, so the rationales presented here are speculative.

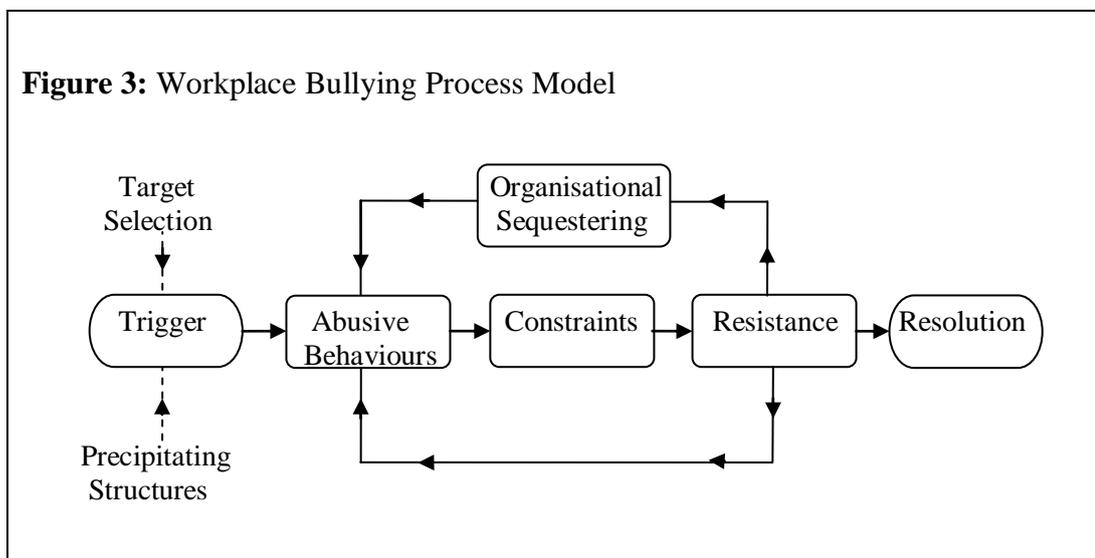
In summary, this section answered research question 1 by indicating the extent of bullying in New Zealand ITPs. The findings from the NAQ showed that New Zealand ITPs produced higher frequency levels of workplace bullying than reported in studies from Europe. It also showed that the negative behaviours with the highest frequencies are the same across all published studies (where data this was reported). A discussion of the roles of national culture, work sector, national attention towards bullying, and unionisation has identified some possible explanations for the levels of bullying amongst New Zealand ITP workers. Taking these explanations together, it can be concluded that being a white-collar education worker in a predominantly masculine, individualistic culture appears to increase the likelihood of becoming a target of workplace bullying. Amongst demographic groups, Maori workers were disproportionately represented as targets, and they reported higher levels of negative acts and self-identified bullying, when compared to other non-Maori workers, women and men reported similar levels of negative acts and self-identified bullying, whilst people who undertake part-time or contract work reported the same or fewer negative acts and self-identified bullying than their full-time and permanent colleagues, respectively. For Maori workers, being perceived as standing out may have been a factor in their more frequent selection, whilst part-time and temporary contract

workers were as less likely to stand out, as they could distance themselves from the organisation, and thus they were bullied less. However, these findings suggest that lowered relative power levels do not provide a robust rationale for the existence of bullying but whatever the reasons for these results, the extent of bullying in New Zealand ITPs appears to be great.

The next section expands these results in conjunction with the qualitative findings. It considers the ways in which targets construct both the process of bullying and their emotional experiences of it.

### 7.1.2. The construction of bullying

This section discusses findings related to the construction of bullying to answer research question 2. One of the most important findings in this study is that targets construct the experience of bullying as an eight-stage, iterative process. This process formed a model (shown again in Figure 3) that comprises the events that trigger bullying, abusive behaviours, constraints that limit targets' actions, forms of resistance, the ways in which organisations sequester bullying, and means by which the process is resolved. In addition, the influence of precipitating structures (Salin, 2003b) and target selection is recognised.



The process model makes an important contribution by filling gaps in the existing literature. Most importantly, it is the first such model to be based on a systematic analysis of targets' experiences. Furthermore, it incorporates all types of target experiences: downward, horizontal, and upward. The current model thus extends

those of Leymann (1990) and Lutgen-Sandvik (2003) by including the experiences of targets of upward bullying. Furthermore, the model addresses targets' rationales for the ways in which they chose to resist bullying, which adds a new dimension to existing models.

A further extension to existing models is made with the inclusion of organisational sequestering. This stage in the process highlights the ways in which organisations, that targets might reasonably expect to resolve bullying and provide support (i.e., managers, HR, and unions), typically set aside this responsibility and contribute to the continuation of bullying. Finally, the new model provides a further contribution to literature by identifying two ways of resolving bullying, compared to the single way offered by existing models. Targets in this study reported that the departure of the perpetrator or their own departure led to bullying ceasing, whereas previous models only allow for the departure of the target. Each of the elements of the process model links to subsequent stages, and targets may make numerous iterations of the model, depending on the type of resistance they use and its effectiveness. Acknowledging the iterative cycle is important, as it reflects the repetitive nature of bullying that targets reported.

Key points to note are that bullying starts with a change in the structure of the workgroup. The only way that bullying is fully resolved is with a further change and the departure of key personnel (i.e., the perpetrator or target). Participants in this study constructed bullying as an episode--albeit one that could last for many years--that disrupted regular, respectful work relationships. The most important findings related to the construction of bullying are discussed below.

#### ***7.1.2.1. Work relationships***

Ultimately workplace bullying is a product of relationships. Not surprisingly, workplace relationships—especially changes to such relationships or variations from the norm—featured prominently in several different contexts. Such changes could prompt the start of bullying, serve as a method of sequestering and avoiding bullying, or provide a resolution.

The first way in which changes in work relationships influenced bullying was in precipitating structures. Targets cited new people, managers, colleagues, and subordinates as being associated with the onset of bullying. For example, a

new manager with a set of expectations that do not meld with the existing culture might produce a disruption that provides a suitable environment for the onset of bullying. In this study, new managers abused subordinates, but sometimes new managers became targets of upward bullying. Similarly, a new colleague in a team could cause disruption that allowed bullying to commence. Whilst new members may often join work groups with little apparent negative impact (or indeed with a positive effect), the frequent mention by targets of new members precipitating bullying episodes is noteworthy. New members may create tensions that need to be managed as existing roles and relationships are threatened. Indeed all relationships (workplace and otherwise) involve common tensions to be managed (Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Zorn, 1995). Therefore, in summary, changes in the structure of the workgroup may sometimes provide an environment that enables bullying to commence and thrive.

Secondly, HR sometimes altered work relationships to reduce the amount of contact between targets and perpetrators in order to mitigate the effects of bullying. Rejigging, a form of organisational sequestering, provided a way of allowing targets and perpetrators to continue to work by minimising or managing contact. Examples of such changes included altered reporting lines and having HR workers act as supporters in meetings. Although these changes were helpful for targets temporarily, they had the effect of smoothing over or setting aside the underlying problems rather than resolving them. Failing to investigate and resolve problems resulted in on-going difficulties that continued until to the work relationship ceased.

A further way of changing work relationships, and thus limiting contact with perpetrators, was by being a part-time or temporary contract worker. The survey results showed that part-time workers and temporary contract workers sometimes experienced less bullying than full-time workers, possibly because these groups had external interests that enabled them to focus their energies on activities outside their organisations and reduce contact with perpetrators. Furthermore, temporary workers may have limited their work commitment, as their role was not necessarily ongoing. This reduced commitment may have provided them with some protection because, as discussed in section 5.5.2., commitment resulted in targets acting altruistically, but failing to care for themselves, and thus increasing their suffering. Temporary contract workers may

have found it easier to avoid commitment and to leave the organisation rather than stay to be abused.

Finally, permanently changing the work group provided the only solution to bullying from the perspective of targets. When perpetrators left for other positions that took them away from the target's workgroup, bullying ceased for that target. Similarly, when targets went to work for different parts of their organisation, or left for new positions, they moved away from bullying situations. No targets reported that perpetrators received censure for their behaviour, but when perpetrators departed this provided a sense of relief and allowed targets to work in a non-abusive environment again. These findings are particularly important because they provide solutions for targets and indicate that organisations should refocus their efforts on providing an environment in which perpetrators are unable to thrive.

In summary, changes in work relationships are an important feature of workplace bullying. Such changes may provide: (1) a suitable environment for the bullying episode to commence, (2) respite and reduced opportunities for bullying to occur by limiting levels of interpersonal contact, through sequestering and part-time or temporary work, finally, (3) a resolution for the target, by permanently breaking the direct work relationship, with the departure of either the perpetrator or target.

#### ***7.1.2.2. Bullying and job outcomes***

A further component of the construction of bullying relates to work outcomes. Extant research indicated that experiencing negative acts would have a negative effect on job satisfaction and job performance (e.g., Bilgel et al., 2006; Einarsen et al., 1998; Leymann, 1990; Nielsen et al., 2008). However, in this study job satisfaction was reduced by bullying but job performance was unaffected. Reasons for these findings are discussed in the following sections.

##### ***7.1.2.2.1. Job satisfaction***

Experiencing negative acts had a negative effect on job satisfaction. This finding was expected because bullying behaviours may cause a range of stress-related effects in targets, (e.g., distress, loss of self-confidence, illness). As the bullying process comprises a range of negative acts, decisions about resistance, and

sometimes organisational sequestering that prolongs the difficulties, it is unsurprising that job satisfaction is reduced. Even when a bullying episode ends, feelings of dissatisfaction can still exist. For example, Felix said that for two years after his perpetrator left he found it hard to regain his former enthusiasm for his work and he "...looked for all the bad things" about his workplace, which reinforced his feelings of dissatisfaction.

The ways in which interviewees described bullying also suggested that job satisfaction would be unlikely to feature in their work. Targets used metaphorical terms to describe their experiences such as, amongst other things, being subjected to violence, going mad, and being abandoned on a desert island. These metaphors were associated with a range of the emotions linked to shame, sadness, pain, fear, anxiety, anger, hatred, and disgust. The metaphors and associated emotions vividly reflected the extent of the unpleasantness caused by bullying, so it would be hard to feel satisfied with work whilst experiencing these difficulties. Therefore, while the finding that bullying and reduced job satisfaction are correlated is not surprising, it provides reinforcement of the seriousness of bullying.

#### *7.1.2.2.2. Job performance*

It was expected that experiencing negative acts would have a negative affect on job performance, as found by Mathisen et al. (2008). However, in contrast to its relationship to job satisfaction, bullying did not have a negative effect on job performance. Although initially this was surprising, literature and interviewees provided some explanations for why this might be the case. First, extant research states that conscientious workers may be more likely to become targets (Leymann, 1990; Namie & Namie, 2000; Needham, 2003), and this seemed to be the case with targets interviewed in this study. Conscientiousness emerged when several targets spoke of their commitment to their students and how they tried to ensure that their negative experiences did not affect their work. For example, Isabella talked about being passionate about teaching, and taking her motivation from her classes rather than her manager; she said this approach enabled her to continue doing a "brilliant job" for her students rather than letting her work standards deteriorate. Similarly, Cindy commented, "I give 100% to my students"; whilst Denny explained, "I try not to let it affect my delivery. My world is my students

and I love them". Thus, interview data suggests that targets' commitment to their students enabled them to maintain their job performance, even while experiencing bullying. A second, related explanation is that job type may mitigate the effects of bullying on job performance. Enriched jobs, for example those that have a degree of latitude, significance, variety, and responsibility for outcomes, can neutralise negative situations (Mione, n.d.; Schaubroeck, Walumbwa, Ganster, & Kepes, 2007). Teaching may be considered an enriched job, in that it usually involves independent decision-making that enables the targets to maintain some control over their work (Einarsen et al., 1994). Furthermore, this work usually has a significant impact on other people (i.e., students) and working with adult students can be intrinsically rewarding (even for non-teaching staff), so the fulfilling nature of their work may have revived targets' spirits sufficiently to enable them to continue to perform well at work. In addition, teaching may provide a break from the perpetrator, as the perpetrator is unlikely to be involved in the target's classroom work. The findings have some similarity with the power relationships findings (sections 7.1.1.6.3. and 7.1.1.6.4.), because even temporarily diverting attention away from perpetrators' actions—whether through part-time or temporary work, or by spending time in the classroom—appeared to provide targets with some respite from bullying and perhaps a resource to enable coping. These factors, when considered in conjunction with the interviewees' comments, provide further explanations for the lack of direct effects of bullying on job performance.

Of course, job performance was self-rated and it is possible that targets omitted to mention their own shortcomings. However, if their performance had deteriorated significantly this would have left them open to the performance management process. As discussed in section 5.9., none of the interviewees reported being performance managed, so it seems unlikely that the issue of self-rating explains these findings

In summary, participants constructed bullying as having a negative effect on job satisfaction but not on job performance. Targets experienced a range of negative emotions associated with their experiences that also reduced their job satisfaction. However, targets' conscientiousness, which manifested itself in commitment to students, and general enjoyment of the job, may have mitigated effects on job performance. Commitment to students appears to have provided a

diversion that enabled targets to cope with the episode of bullying. Finally, ITP staff had opportunities for enriched experiences through their work with students, whilst teaching staff also had opportunities for time away from perpetrators, so overall these workers were able to maintain their job performance.

### **7.1.3. Construction of emotions**

This section discusses findings related to the construction of emotions to answer research question 3. Emotions emerged from the metaphors used by targets. The association of targets' metaphors and background stories with supporting literature provided a conduit for identifying and constructing the emotions that underpinned the experience of bullying. Metaphors showed that targets constructed bullying as being a form of violence, madness, a natural force, being on a desert island, in water, part of a game, and in hell. Perpetrators were duplicitous, a bad witch, a dangerous animal, explosive, and a waterfall. Targets saw themselves as children, weak creatures, and leaves.

A broad range of emotions emerged from these metaphors. The emotions cluster into the three primary groups of (1) shame, sadness, and pain, (2) anxiety and fear, and (3) anger, hatred, and disgust (Storm & Storm, 1987). The first group (shame, sadness, and pain) emerged most frequently. The majority of emotions (i.e., groups 1 and 2 combined), provide an insight into the many negative, internally focused emotions that targets held. In contrast, group 3 highlights the negative emotions that targets directed at perpetrators and organisations in general. Recognising the presence of these different types of emotions provides some insight into the difficulties caused by bullying for both targets and others. Certain metaphors and emotions appeared to be associated with specific aspects of the bullying process. Finally, some bullying metaphors and emotions appeared to be universal. The following sections discuss the key issues that emerged in the findings.

#### ***7.1.3.1. Resistance***

Targets appeared to use metaphors that reflected their ability to resist bullying and manage their experiences. For example, targets who perceived they had a degree of control over their situation constructed the experience as battles or fights, and games. Although primary emotions of shame, sadness, and pain emerged from the

majority of metaphors, emotions of anger, hatred, and disgust also emerged strongly from metaphors of battles, fights, and games. Targets directed these emotions outwardly towards perpetrators, and possibly those involved in sequestering the problems, indicating that unresolved bullying may lead to further conflict.

By contrast, targets who perceived that they had less control spoke of attacks and punishment, madness, natural forces, as well as being on desert islands, in water, and in hell. These alternative metaphors reflected more inwardly focused feelings that were associated with the primary emotions of anxiety and fear. For these targets, their chosen metaphors suggested emotions of powerlessness, hopelessness, and misery.

These findings suggest that bullying can be quite a different experience for targets depending on their circumstances and their personal approach to conflict. Targets who feel they have strength may continue to outwardly engage with perpetrators, whilst those who feel weakened by the process may become more focused on themselves. Innate strength may be present in the early stages of bullying, but this can reduce as the prolonged impact of the process wears away targets' coping resources. Not everyone is naturally strong and some people have priorities that they perceive as preventing them directing their emotions outwardly. Therefore metaphors provide an insight to the impact that bullying has had on the targets and the ways in which they may focus their emotions.

The contrasting metaphors, and indeed the association of metaphors and emotions with resistance, have not been noted in earlier studies. As there are few studies in this area, this finding makes an interesting and useful contribution to literature.

#### ***7.1.3.2. Sequestering***

Many interviewees reported that managers, HR workers, and unions contributed to the process of bullying. These organisational members prolonged the difficulties by reframing or rejigging the situation, or rebuffering the target. Interviewees responded to their experiences of organisational sequestering by using metaphors that linked to isolation on desert islands and madness. These metaphors were associated with the emotions of devastation, despair, neglect, rejection, and disturbance, as targets felt misunderstood and abandoned by the

people from whom they expected, and in the case of unions had paid, to support them. Sequestering made targets feel even worse and compounded the effects of the negative behaviours that they endured. As noted in section 7.1.2.2.1., sequestering may be an important factor in the reduction of targets' job satisfaction.

### **7.1.3.3. *Universality***

Finally, the association of metaphors with targets' background stories and extant literature resulted in the emergence of eight primary emotions that fitted into three of the groups identified by Storm and Storm (1987). Of the three, one group--shame, sadness, and pain--appeared to be particularly relevant to bullying. Of the studies that have reported emotions associated with bullying (Tracy et al., 2006; Sheehan et al., 2004), including the current study, all identified sets of emotions that fit into the primary emotional group of shame, sadness, and pain (Storm & Storm, 1987). This consistency appears to indicate that these emotions, and their subordinate terms (e.g., intimidated, miserable, rejected), provide a set of emotions that may be universally associated with bullying.

Overall, the findings in this section answered research questions 2 and 3, by (1) showing the ways in which targets construct the process of bullying and (2) describing how they used metaphors to construct emotional experiences. The process of bullying emerged as a multi-stage, iterative episode that starts and ends with a change in the structure of the organisation. Other changes in the nature of work relationships both mitigated the effects and prolonged the episode. Bullying reduced job satisfaction, but certain features of targets associated with commitment and the presence of enriched jobs are likely to have prevented it affecting job performance. A range of metaphors emerged and these resulted in a construct that comprised a range of negative emotions and experiences. Finally, two sets of universally applicable findings indicate that similar negative acts and emotions emerge from workplace bullying.

In summary, section 7.1 has shown how the quantitative and qualitative findings answer the three research questions. This section has provided a variety of explanations for these findings. The next section discusses the implications of this study.

## **7.2. Implications**

This study has implications for theory and practice. These implications are discussed below.

### **7.2.1. For theory**

This study has three main implications for theory. These are (1) a revised process model (2) a systematic approach to emotion identification and (3) international comparisons of quantitative data.

A key implication for theory is the introduction of a bullying process model. While previous models of the process exist (Leymann, 1990; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003), they have not been based on any systematic analysis of data. The model developed for this study emerged from a systematic analysis of targets' and HR practitioners' interview accounts. The result is that the model is grounded in the interviewees' experiences, and thus provides a rich, detailed, and evidence-based picture of the bullying process. The model also provides a more comprehensive view of the experience of bullying compared to previous such models; it encompasses the range of experiences that targets endure, regardless of whether the perpetrator is above, below, or at an equal level to them. It provides a loop to represent the repetitive nature of bullying and it introduces the notion of organisational sequestering as contributing to the ongoing nature of bullying. The model also incorporates precipitating structures and target selection as vital components of the process. Overall, the model shows that bullying represents a process, albeit an unpleasant one, that does eventually end. The model makes an important contribution to theory, owing to its use of interview data. Furthermore, it provides a simple, but effective way of illustrating the bullying process that extends existing, conceptual models.

The second implication for theory relates to the identification of emotions. Whilst previous studies (Sheehan et al., 2004; Tracy et al., 2006) have identified emotions associated with bullying, the present study is the first to use a process to do so. A two stage approach was used. First the use of a systematic process (Steger, 2007) to identify emotions through metaphors provided a rigorous method for identifying their meaning. The use of extracts from background stories and literature to support the emotions chosen increased the robustness of the analysis. Second, the use of recognised taxonomy (Storm & Storm, 1987) to

organise the diverse emotional terms into primary groupings emphasised the predominant emotions associated with bullying. These approaches provide a clear connection between the metaphors and emotions. Therefore, the introduction of a systematic process with defined terms provides a framework for future researchers to use and the approach offers opportunities for structured comparisons.

The third and final implication for theory draws on the quantitative analysis. Comparing the current NAQ results with those from Scandinavia and Turkey broadens international knowledge of the relative extent of bullying across countries and contexts. The comparisons show how results from the countries vary and the ways in which they were similar. Comparing data in this way enables specific aspects of the findings to be identified, for example, the similarities of item responses across four different countries and multiple industry sectors. Furthermore, the quantitative data confirms the factor analysis of bullying dimensions (e.g., harassment) and shows the third factor (social exclusion) to be more robust in the present study ( $\alpha=.62$ ), compared to Einarsen and Raknes (1997) ( $\alpha=.33$ ), which should provide confidence to other researchers who may wish to use this approach. Finally, comparisons of this nature, despite their limitations, are particularly useful for situating groups of workers, by industry or country, that have previously been unacknowledged by workplace bullying research and therefore this approach is encouraged.

### **7.2.2. For practice**

This study raises several implications for practitioners. The frequency rates found in the present study appear high and indicate an urgent need for implementation of mechanisms to enable workplaces to manage the workplace bullying process better. The next section discusses some recommendations.

#### ***7.2.2.1. Acknowledging and managing bullying***

Organisations must recognise and challenge bullying for management strategies to be effective (Stevens, 2002). The prevalence of negative acts in ITPs indicates there is a serious problem to be addressed in the sector. A third of the targets in the qualitative part of this study came from an organisation that actively avoided acknowledging the existence of bullying. Managers, HR workers, and union reps at this ITP used a range of sequestering techniques to reframe complaints, rejig

work arrangements, and rebuff targets. These techniques ranged from ignoring problems, possibly innocently, to wilful attempts to prevent targets making complaints by, for example, using thinly-veiled threats against them. The majority of other ITPs in this study had general anti-harassment policies, but they tended to be ineffective at, or not especially committed to, implementing them, which supports the findings of a study of public sector organisations in Finland, where it was noted that policies are unlikely to be effective alone (Salin, 2008, 2009). When these observations are combined with the finding that the only way to resolve bullying once it occurs is to remove either the target or perpetrator, this inaction is potentially very costly for organisations. The financial imperative, at the very least, should provide a rationale for taking action to resolve bullying promptly.

Employees are likely to feel more confident about their situation if they believe they receive support from management (Djurkovic et al., 2008). Support results in targets being less likely to report feeling bullied (Bilgel et al., 2006); whilst unsupported targets may use research interviews as an opportunity to speak out (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). In the course of collecting the data for this study, HR workers two organisations clearly understood and acknowledged the existence of bullying, actively implemented training for staff, and took action to resolve complaints about bullying following a defined process. The HR managers at these organisations saw bullying as a natural, but distinct, development from sexual and racial harassment, and considered it an area that HR should both manage proactively and be responsible for interventions. Of the 31 target-interviewees in this study, none worked at the proactive institutes, even though workers from these two institutes were invited to volunteer for interviews, which may suggest that the approach of the HR managers was successful. This observation highlights a potential relationship between taking a proactive approach to bullying and being able to manage problems within the organisation, similar to that noted by Salin (2008, 2009). It appears that ITP workers who were able to gain satisfactory organisational support saw no reason to air their views in external research, whilst at the same time, those who felt unsupported sought external remedies through the medium of this study. Unfortunately the lack of comments from interviewees to specifically support the observation about proactive organisations limits its use, as the relationship may be explained in other ways, but it does provide

practitioners with an interesting correlation to consider and it also highlights the importance of having support systems that employees believe have some integrity. Finally, it appears that HR workers need to take a more comprehensive approach to managing all aspects of bullying.

#### ***7.2.2.2. Managing the target and the perpetrator***

Providing support for targets is a vital part of being a good employer; however, it is also important to take steps to manage bullying and prevent it recurring. Whilst the findings were unequivocal in suggesting that targets and perpetrators should no longer work together in order to fully resolve bullying, managers still need to adopt a comprehensive approach to resolving problems. Although a simple solution might be to remove the target, this is unlikely to resolve the inherent problems (Stevens, 2002). Furthermore, under current New Zealand employment legislation employers cannot simply remove an employee without following a fair and often protracted process. Practitioners need to be aware that perpetrators are likely to use bullying tactics repeatedly, and they will select new targets when the work relationships change (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003). Therefore, it is vital that managers monitor and manage perpetrators, and move them to positions where they cannot be abusive again, or alternatively manage them out of the organisation. At minimum, providing strong policies against bullying and then following up and investigating claims against potential perpetrators would be a useful first step.

#### ***7.2.2.3. Timeframes***

A further implication for practitioners is the need to be aware of the long-term nature of the bullying process. Perpetrators may have subjected targets to abuse for many months before targets take action. Indeed bullying, by its very definition, entails persistent behaviour, so targets may be exhausted and may appear to overreact or act in unexpected ways. Given the negative emotions that targets experience, unusual behaviour should not be a surprise. The long-term effects of bullying and the possibility of post-traumatic stress should not be underrated. During the interviews for this study, targets were recounting experiences that had happened many months and sometimes years before, but their emotional responses were still acute and raw, despite several of them

believing they had recovered from the experiences. Therefore, implications for practitioners include a need to consider the likely impact of long-term abuse on targets and others, such as witnesses, and take this into account when deciding how to intervene and successfully manage bullying. Targets may present themselves as distraught or hyper-sensitive, but this may be the result of their experiences, rather than being the cause. When bullying has been resolved, monitoring of former targets, witnesses, and perpetrators, and the provision of appropriate support, could help to prevent future episodes of bullying.

#### ***7.2.2.4. Behaviour management***

As noted in the international comparisons of the NAQ findings (discussed in section 7.1.1.5.), the same three questions had high response frequencies for all of the studies, indicating that there is a consistency in the types of negative behaviour targets experience, regardless of their country and sector. This finding has useful implications for practitioners, because it provides a focus on behaviours that may serve as warning signs to tip-off managers and HR workers that bullying is occurring or has the potential to arise.

A further potentially positive finding from this study is that many of the most frequently experienced negative behaviours may, in some cases, not be a matter of bullying but of misunderstanding, a lack of courtesy, or a lack of basic communication skills. For example, the three most frequent acts—important information being withheld, targets having their opinions and views ignored, and targets being ordered to do lower level work—in isolation may be unintended, a result of circumstance (e.g., someone being in too much of a hurry to provide full information), or a lack of tact. Opportunities exist to decrease the frequency of such occurrences through training, role modelling, establishing workplace norms, and the like. Managers can train those who are discourteous and poor communicators. Senior staff may be encouraged to be role models for appropriate behaviours and develop their use by others (Stevens, 2002). Furthermore, guidelines on standards of behaviour, such as a code of conduct, may be useful for clarifying expectations. Such initiatives can nurture an environment that encourages respectful relationships and discourages behaviours that contribute to bullying, as respect allows for intellectual conflict that does not develop into relationship problems (Jehn, 1997).

#### ***7.2.2.5. Organisational sequestering***

Practitioners need to be aware of their own behaviour. This study has shown how managers, HR, and union workers use organisational sequestering—possibly inadvertently—and the risks that this approach presents. Managers and HR workers reframed bullying as personal, trivial, and as a defence to criticism; consequently, they failed to provide targets with support and bullying continued.

Targets reported that managers, HR workers, and union representatives rejigged reporting relationships and rebuffed targets, which had the effect of prolonging bullying and adding to targets' difficulties by making them feel powerless and rejected. Failing to manage bullying is likely to produce a workplace that is conducive to further abusive behaviour and this inaction compounds difficulties for the organisation (Rayner et al., 2002; Zapf, 1999). Overall, the potential impact of organisational sequestering should provide an incentive for practitioners to take complaints of workplace bullying seriously.

#### ***7.2.2.6. Policy creation***

Gaining legal recognition of bullying in New Zealand would provide an important step towards recognising this phenomenon and producing systems to minimise its effects. Legal protection would offer incentives to organisations to prevent bullying and provide compensation for targets (Yamada, 2010). However, training of employers is vital to ensure that any legislation is successful (Hoel & Einarsen, 2010), and it would also need to take into account the ways in which organisations sequester issues. If organisations may simply reframe bullying, for example as the target's fault, then legislation is unlikely to be helpful. As a minimum, replicating the interventions of the two proactive ITP (i.e., treating bullying as an extension of sexual and racial harassment), might provide a useful starting-point for policy development and training in organisations,

#### ***7.2.2.7. Metaphors for intervention***

Finally, recognising and acknowledging metaphors may provide opportunities for identifying interventions for targets and organisations. As metaphors may provide guidance on what to do and what to avoid (Hart, 2003), they may assist targets to both understand and communicate their experiences, whilst at the same time providing them with a mechanism for identifying the limitations that their

metaphors may evoke. With recognition, targets may gain the opportunity to reconsider and imagine their experiences using different metaphors, and thus find alternative ways of managing. For example, whilst reflecting on his experiences, interviewee Perry said his description of being trapped on a desert island may have limited his opportunities for resolution and had he thought about it in an alternative way he might have acted differently. Similarly, metaphors may be useful for HR workers, and other staff responsible for interventions, to signal the extent of the problems for targets and the limitations for resolution that they foresee. Therefore, metaphors may assist with interventions at both the organisational and individual levels.

In summary, a number of implications have emerged that provide illumination and guidance for practitioners. At this stage, recognition of bullying, and a proactive approach to managing it, appear to be most effective. Practitioners should also be mindful of the impact of persistent negative experiences on the target, and the likelihood of perpetrators being incorrigible. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, practitioners should not underestimate the importance their own role in preventing bullying and reducing its effects.

Overall, there are a variety of implications for theory, and practice. Key implications are an extension to current process models for theory, a range of recommendations for practitioners that emphasise their role in the process, and finally a recommendation that legal recognition is introduced.

### **7.3. Limitations**

Like all research, some aspects of the present study limit the findings and may restrict opportunities to generalise. One major limitation of the present study is its narrow industry focus. The relatively homogeneous sample may limit generalisations and a broader cross section of New Zealand workers might have produced different outcomes.

A further limitation, and a possible reason for the high bullying frequencies in the survey, was that respondents were self-selecting, so the sample is not representative of the general population. With a study of this nature, there is always the possibility that organisational members who have experienced bullying, or who are targets, were able to promote the study thus creating greater interest from respondents who had experience of bullying. Equally, and as noted

in the literature review, invisibility and construal bias may hamper studies of workplace bullying (Branch et al., 2006) by making them of little interest to potential respondents who have not had any experiences of bullying or who choose to reframe their experiences. Despite these limitations, there are special features of the bullying phenomenon that support the use of self-selection. This approach is appropriate when aiming to study groups that have the most severe experience of a phenomenon (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2008). Consequently, contrary to being a limitation, the use of self-selection may go some way to explaining the rich vein of experience that the findings reveal.

A practical limitation occurred with the use of international comparisons, in that NAQ frequency data was not readily available. Although many studies have used the NAQ, reports of frequency data are rare, and this limitation may have influenced the results. Furthermore, having different versions of the NAQ (e.g., 29 versus 22 questions) and permitting changes (e.g., local alterations, such as those in this study, and translations) made direct comparisons more difficult.

Sample sizes, particularly in relation to the results of power tests for part-time, temporary contract, and Maori workers, were small ( $n = 25$  (17%),  $n = 13$  (9%),  $n = 17$  (11%), respectively). In particular, the findings towards Maori, while providing the greatest number of differences, were based on the smallest number of employees ( $n = 17$ ). Therefore, it would be appropriate to treat these results with caution at this stage.

Furthermore, interviews have limitations as a data collection method, because they rely on respondents' willingness to provide complete and accurate stories (Frey et al., 1991). Interviewees may describe experiences in different ways depending on the audience, so the descriptions provided in this study may vary compared to those shared with other people, such as friends or colleagues (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Interviewees may have excluded parts of their story to make it more coherent, or altered it to fit what they perceived as the needs of the study. Bias may have affected the accuracy of the stories, as interviewees may well have told their stories in ways that cast them in a favourable light. Consequently, the narratives are not final, complete stories, because "there are no whole stories" (Boje, 2001, p. 5). As a researcher, I became part of the setting, context and culture, albeit briefly, and I acknowledge that my background and perspective will have affected the ways in which interviewees told their narratives

(Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Finally, my interpretation of the data follows one of many potential approaches, and other researchers may have reached different conclusions. Therefore, my knowledge, background (especially relating to the ITP sector), and perspective will have affected the narrative, both by influencing the responses of the interviewees and by my interpretation in the final report (Emerson, et al., 1995), but the use of an additional coder should have reduced any bias. Overall, the inability to access full stories, my influence on the way interviewees told them, and my interpretations are limitations of this study.

Confidentiality presented a further limitation, as this prevented follow-up with potentially interesting responses. For example, one person presented herself as a target, but two other targets identified her as a perpetrator, so it might have been useful to move the interview in this direction but confidentiality precluded doing so. In addition, I had to be careful not to disclose that I was aware of certain incidents during the interviews, for example, where I heard multiple reports of the same event, because I could have breached another person's confidence. However, despite the limitations, confidentiality was vital because some of the participants were fearful of reprisals from the people they discussed, and thus it is unlikely that the material collected for this study would have been available without this promise.

Finally, as discussed in the opening chapter, limited research had occurred in New Zealand until recently, so the relative novelty of the study may have prompted higher levels, or more extreme examples, of reporting compared to existing studies. It may also be possible that workers in the ITP sector share a particular set of expectations about behaviour or work outcomes that are unfulfilled. Whatever the reasons, the findings indicate that the prevalence of workplace bullying appears to be a serious issue in New Zealand ITPs.

#### **7.4. Future research**

The NAQ frequency rates in the present study appear high and indicate a need for greater research into workplace bullying in New Zealand. Future research may seek to establish direct international collaborations and may reconsider cultural aspects and power-distance as ways of explaining differences. A formalized, international comparison using the 29-item NAQ would have the ability to provide greater international clarity along similar lines to other organisational

behaviour studies (e.g., Spector et al., 2004). Finally, future studies in New Zealand should also look to collect data from a wider array of employees and perhaps use a slightly different methodology, for example, using a defined group rather than volunteers within a broader group, to reduce response bias, as practically as possible.

Clearly, there is a need for further research to establish whether the quantitative and qualitative findings of the present study are merely an anomaly related to this particular sector, where perhaps respondents have used the survey in the absence of other suitable avenues for communicating their experiences, or whether there is a systemic problem in New Zealand higher education. To establish a broader picture, replication of the processes used and developed in this study could occur in other sectors and countries. Specifically, by using the workplace bullying process model with other targets, it should be possible to confirm its efficacy. A potentially interesting study might be to analyse metaphors and emotions using the same processes as in the current study but in a different sector, to establish similarities and differences. Furthermore, collecting metaphors from different countries might result in novel alternative descriptions, which may in turn reflect a different range of emotions.

Investigating the atypical, unacceptable or creative ways in which targets deal successfully with bullying may also be a fruitful and interesting piece of future research. A more difficult, but potentially rewarding area for future study might be to gather demographic information about perpetrators from targets. As noted in section 7.1.1.6.1., a comment about bullying and Maori was made, and it was unclear whether this related to Maori targets or perpetrators, so it would be useful to know if, for example, certain nationalities bullied other nationalities. Other demographic groups could be asked the same types of questions, with the objective of finding out whether there are patterns in the perpetrator data that might further elucidate this subject.

Finally, investigating organisations that have an anti-bullying policy and proactive approach to managing the phenomenon could provide useful guidance to organisations that struggle to find solutions. Overall, there are several potentially interesting and rewarding avenues for further study.

## 7.5. Conclusions

This study has measured the extent of workplace bullying amongst New Zealand ITP workers and examined the individual experiences of being a target, using statistical and thematic analysis, respectively. The use of a multi-method approach has produced different perspectives of workplace bullying, and sets of results that challenge and contribute to existing literature, whilst also providing useful information for practitioners.

Workers in this sector reported high levels of bullying compared with those in several other countries. Despite the limitations noted in the preceding section, the high levels point to a serious issue that most organisations are not addressing adequately, if at all. Temporary and part-time workers reported the same or less bullying than permanent and full-time workers, men and women reported similarly high levels of bullying, so the problem seems to be one for the general workforce, rather than one that rests solely with minorities. An exception came from Maori workers, who reported higher levels than non-Maori workers. Maori workers appeared to be particularly at risk of becoming targets of bullying, possibly owing to their minority status in both the country and the workplace. Overall, these findings suggest that bullying is a significant issue that may be integral to the New Zealand workforce.

Interviewees provided detailed accounts of their experiences of being the targets of bullying. A thematic analysis of interview transcripts indicated that despite having a wide range of different experiences, the stories fitted into a pattern. The resulting process showed that a change of personnel, or threatened change in the structure of the workgroup, provided a suitable environment for bullying to ferment whilst perpetrators selected suitable targets. Similar changes occurred around the targets' resolution of the situation, and bullying only ended with the severing of the immediate work relationship between the target and the perpetrator.

Abusive behaviours were a vital component of the process, but were not sufficient alone to constitute bullying. Targets repeatedly experienced a variety of abusive behaviours, ranging from aggression through to ostracism. Each target met the definition of having experienced harm, for example, through stress and ill-health, the effects of which were frequently serious. Several targets expressed

bitterness at their treatment and it was clear that many of them found their experiences devastating. Some targets became deeply distressed when recalling events, even though these episodes that had ended years earlier and prior to the interview targets believed that they had made a full recovery.

Resistance emerged in a number of forms, and using formal complaints, or threatening to use them, was the most successful strategy for reducing bullying. Other active approaches, such as confrontation, were helpful but none of these approaches resolved the difficulties or resulted from an assertive interaction. Passive and paradoxical approaches were useful as coping strategies but they did not lead to any reduction in bullying. Targets sometimes felt their resistance options were constrained by their financial circumstances and others were concerned that processes might be weighted against them. A few took an altruistic view and put their students' needs before their own, which also limited their resistance choices.

Inappropriate management played a key role in bullying. Perpetrators were often superiors, but colleagues, subordinates, and sometimes a combination, participated in the process. Management issues featured in targets' accounts, even when colleagues and subordinates were the perpetrators. This is unsurprising because senior managers create environments that either inhibit bullying or permit it to thrive. Several targets found that the people they had expected to support them were ineffective or caused them more problems. HR workers, line-managers, and sometimes union representatives avoided managing bullying by reframing the difficulties away from the organisation, creating temporary interventions without resolving the core issues, or simply ignoring them. Organisational sequestering emerged as an important factor in the process of bullying, and one that prolonged and exacerbated the difficulties for targets.

Ultimately, bullying ended when the target and perpetrator no longer worked together, although, the after-effects for the target could continue for years after the parting. Perpetrators invariably left without censure and of their own volition, whilst targets tended to leave voluntarily after finding alternative work. These were the only ways in which bullying was resolved for targets.

Metaphors indicated that bullying was a deeply emotional and long-lasting experience and targets used metaphors to communicate their experiences in elaborate ways. The metaphors, and the ways in which targets wove them through

their stories, suggested that a significant amount of reflection had taken place. Metaphors also provided a mechanism for identifying the underlying emotions associated with bullying, the predominant ones being shame, sadness, and pain. The metaphors indicated that the process of bullying was complex and damaging to targets.

Overall, the study has highlighted the high levels of bullying in the New Zealand ITP sector and provided an in-depth analysis of the ways in which targets construct their experiences. These findings have answered the three research questions and in doing so have revealed a range of interesting outcomes. The study challenges and extends existing literature, and makes several important contributions to research. In addition, the findings provide a practical contribution to support the development of policy and to enable organisations to improve their understanding and management of bullying.

## Bibliography

- Aasgaard, R. (2008). Like a child: Paul's rhetorical uses of childhood. In M. J. Bunge, T. E. Fretheim, & B. R. Gaventa (Eds.), *Child in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Adams, A., & Crawford, N. (1992). *Bullying at work: how to confront and overcome it*. London: Virago.
- Agervold, M. (2007). Bullying at work: A discussion of definitions and prevalence, based on an empirical study. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 48, 161-172.
- Alberts, J., Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Tracy, S. (2005). Escalated incivility: Analyzing workplace bullying as a communication phenomenon. *International Communication Association*. New York.
- Allport, G. (1979). *The nature of prejudice* (2nd ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Altheide, D. L., & Johnson, M. J. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 485-499). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Alvesson, M., & Deetz, S. (2000). *Doing critical management research*. London: Sage.
- Ammer, C. (1997). *The American heritage dictionary of idioms*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Andersson, L. M., & Pearson, C. M. (1999). Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace. *Academy of Management Preview*, 24 (3), 452-471.
- Archer, D. (1999). Exploring "bullying" culture in the para-military organisation. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20 (1/2), 94-105.
- Ashforth, B., & Mael, F. (1998). The power of resistance: Sustaining valued identities. In R. M. Kramer, & M. A. Neale (Eds.), *Power and influence in organizations* (pp. 89-119). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ayling, D. (2002). Defining workplace harrassment: Who is the bully? *New Zealand Applied Business Education Conference*. Christchurch.
- Baron, R. A., & Neuman, J. H. (1996). Workplace Violence and Workplace aggression: Evidence on their relative frequency and potential causes. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 22, 161-173.

- Baron, R. A., & Neuman, J. H. (1998). Workplace aggression - the iceberg beneath the tip of workplace violence: Evidence of its forms, frequency, and targets. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 21, 446-464.
- Baruch, Y. (2005). Bullying on the net: adverse behavior on e-mail and its impact. *Information & Management*, 42 (2), 361-371.
- Bassman, E. S. (1992). *Abuse in the workplace*. Westport: Quorum Books.
- Bentley, T., Catley, B., Cooper-Thomas, H., Gardner, D., O'Driscoll, M., & Trenberth, L. (2009). *Understanding stress and bullying in New Zealand workplaces*. Health Research Council of New Zealand. Wellington: Health Research Council of New Zealand.
- Bentley, T., Catley, B., Gardner, D., O'Driscoll, M., Trenberth, L., & Cooper-Thomas, H. (2009). Perspectives on bullying in the New Zealand health and hospitality sectors. *Journal of Occupational Health and Safety Australia and New Zealand*, 25 (5), 363-373.
- Bergen Bullying Research Group. (n.d.). Retrieved June 5, 2009, from Bergen Bullying Research Group: <https://www.uib.no/rg/bbrg/projects/naq>
- Bilgel, N., Aytac, S., & Bayram, N. (2006). Bullying in Turkish white-collar workers. *Occupational Medicine*, 56, 226-231.
- Biz. (2010). Retrieved April 16, 2010, from Business.govt.nz: <http://www.business.govt.nz/Business-resources/Glossary/Personal-Grievance.aspx>
- Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, K., & Hjelt-Back, M. (1994). Aggression among university employees. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 20, 173-184.
- Blanchflower, D. G. (2007). International patterns of union membership. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45 (1), 1-28.
- Boje, D. M. (2001). *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*. London: Sage.
- Bowen, G. A. (2006). Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5 (3).
- Bradley, H. (1999). *Gender and power in the workplace: analyzing the impact of economic change*. Basingstoke: MacMillan Press.
- Branch, S., Ramsey, S., & Barker, M. (2006). Causes of upward bullying: Managers' perspectives. *Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference (ANZAM)*, (pp. 1-17). Rockhampton.

- Branch, S., Ramsay, S., & Barker, M. (2007). Managers in the firing line: Contributing factors to workplace bullying by staff - an interview study. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 13 (3), 264-281.
- Branch, S., Sheehan, M., Barker, M., & Ramsey, S. (2004). Perceptions of upward bullying: An interview study. *The Fourth International Conference on Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace*. Bergen.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (3), 77-101.
- Bray, C. (1999, June). Boycott bullying? *Employment Today*, pp. 30-31.
- Bridge, K., & Baxter, L. A. (1992). Blended relationships: Friends as work associates. *Western Journal of Communication*, 56, 200-225.
- Burt, C. D. (2004). Humour as a predictor of workplace bullying. *The Fourth International Conference on Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace*. Bergen.
- Buzzanell, P. M., & Burrell, N. A. (1997). Family and workplace conflict examining metaphorical conflict schemas and expressions across context and sex. *Human Communication Research*, 24 (1 ), 109-146.
- Carpenter, D. D. (1996). Practicioners of paganism and wiccan spirituality in contemporary society: A review of the literature. In J. R. Lewis (Ed.), *Magical religion and modern witchcraft* (pp. 373-406). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Catley, B., Bentley, T., Cooper-Thomas, H., Trenberth, L., O'Driscoll, M., & Gardner, D. (2010). Managing workplace bullying in New Zealand: Managerial responses from three industries. *Seventh International Conference on Workplace Bullying & Harassment* (pp. 37-38). Cardiff: University of Glamorgan.
- Cemaloglu, N. (2007). The exposure of primary school teachers to bullying: an analysis of various variables. *Social Behaviour and Personality*, 35 (6), 789-802.
- Chandler, D. (2001, 5 11). *Semiotics for beginners: rhetorical tropes*. Retrieved July 22, 2009, from <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem07.html>
- Chatterjee, S., & Hadi, A. S. (2006). *Regression analysis by example* (4th ed.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

- Cheney, G. (2000). Interpreting interpretive research: Toward Perspectivism Without Relativism. In S. Corman, & M. S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on Organizational Communication: Finding Common Ground* (pp. 17-45). New York: Guildford.
- Clair, R. P. (1993). The use of framing devices to sequester organizational narratives: hegemony and harassment. *Communication Monographs*, 60, 113-136.
- Clark, S. K., Halbesleben, J. R., Lester, S. W., & Heintz, R. (2010). Temporary worker alienation and job performance: the impact of rating source. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 7 (3), 287-297.
- Cowie, H., Naylor, P., Rivers, I., Smith, P. K., & Pereira, B. (2002). Measuring workplace bullying. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 7, 33-51.
- Coyne, I., Seigne, E., & Randall, P. (2000). Predicting workplace victim status from personality. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 9 (3), 335-349.
- Davenport, N., Schwartz, R. D., & Elliott, G. P. (1999). *Mobbing - emotional abuse in the American workplace*. Ames: Civil Society.
- Davidson, D. (1978). What metaphors mean. In S. Sacks (Ed.), *On Metaphor* (pp. 29-45). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Defoe, D. (1719). *Robinson Crusoe* (2001 ed.). London: Penguin Books.
- Denenberg, R. V., & Braverman, M. (1999). *The violence prone workplace*. Ithaca: Cronell University Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Department of Labour. (1992, 2002). *Health and Safety in Employment Act*. Retrieved March 26, 2010, from Department of Labour: <http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/law/hse.shtml>
- Deutsch, M., & Coleman, P. T. (2006). Concluding overview. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, & E. C. Marcus, *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 869-880). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Di Martino, V., Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. L. (2003). *Preventing violence and harassment in the workplace*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Dick, G., & Rayner, C. (2004). *The Hidden Bullied: An empirical comparisons of*

- the harassed that refuse to self-label themselves as bullied and the self-labelled bullied.* Working Paper Series, University of Kent.
- Djurkovic, N., McCormack, D., & Casimir, G. (2008). Workplace bullying and intention to leave: the moderating effect of perceived organisational support. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18 (4), 405-422.
- Einarsen, S. (1999). The nature and causes of bullying at work. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20 (1/2), 1-14.
- Einarsen, S. (2000). Harassment and bullying at work: A review of the Scandinavian approach. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour: A Review Journal*, 5 (4), 371-401.
- Einarsen, S., & Hoel, H. (n.d.). *The Negative Acts Questionnaire: Development, validation and revision of a measure of bullying at work.* Bergen: Bergen Bullying Research Group.
- Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C. (2003). *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace.* London: Taylor & Francis.
- Einarsen, S., Matthiesen, S., & Skogstad, A. (1998). Bullying at Work - workplace bullying: assistant nurses. *Journal of Occupational Health and Safety*, 14 (6), 563-568.
- Einarsen, S., & Mikkelsen, E. G. (2003). Individual effects of exposure to bullying at work. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace: International Perspectives in Research and Practice.* London: Taylor Francis.
- Einarsen, S., & Raknes, B. I. (1997). Harassment in the workplace and the victimization of men. *Violence and Victims*, 12 (3), 247-263.
- Elliott, J. (2005). *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* London: Sage.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic field notes.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Equal Employment Opportunities Trust. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2010, from Working effectively with Maori: <http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/toolkits/Maori.cfm?section=howtotapthepotentialofmaori>
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. (n.d.). *Bullying and harassment.* Retrieved June 20, 2010, from European Agency for Safety and Health at Work: <http://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/stress/bullying.stm>

- Fell, L. (2000). Do nurses eat their young? *Kai Tiaki: Nursing New Zealand*, 6 (9), 21.
- Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Field, T. (1996). *Bully in sight*. Oxfordshire: Wessex Press.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2003). The interview from structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin, & S. Lincoln, *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 61-106). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Foster, B., Mackie, B., & Barnett, N. (2004). Bullying in the health sector: A study of bullying of nursing students. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 29 (2), 67-83.
- Fraser, K. (2002). Helping students deal with harassment. *Kai Tiaki: Nursing New Zealand*, 8 (3), 14-15.
- Frey, L., Botan, C., Friedman, P., & Kreps, G. (1991). *Investigating communication - an introduction to research methods*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Gardner, S., & Johnson, P. R. (2001). The leaner, meaner workplace: Strategic for handling bullies at work. *Employment Relations Today* (Summer), 23-36.
- Gilbert, D. T., & Malone, P. S. (1995). The correspondence bias. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117 (1), 21-38.
- Giorgi, G. (2009). Workplace bullying risk assessment in 12 Italian organizations. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 2 (1 ), 34-47.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1999). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Glasø, L., Nielsen, M. B., & Einasen, S. (2009). Interpersonal problems among perpetrators and targets of workplace bullying. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 39 (6), 1316-1333.
- Glendinning, P. M. (2001, Fall). Workplace bullying: Curing the cancer of the American workplace. *Public Personnel Management*.
- Glucksberg, S., & McGlone, M. S. (1999). When love is not a journey: What metaphors mean. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 1541-1558.
- Golding, W. (1954). *Lord of the Flies* (2002 ed.). London: Faber and Faber.
- Goris, J. R., Vaught, B. C., & Pettit, J. D. (2000). Effects of communication

- direction on job performance and satisfaction: A moderated regression analysis. *Journal of Business Communication*, 37(4), 348-368.
- Green, F. (2004). Why has work effort become more intense. *Industrial Relations*, 43 (4), 709-741.
- Hall-Jones, P. (2007). *Beyond the numbers game*. Retrieved June 21, 2010, from New Unionism: <http://www.newunionism.net/library/member%20contributions/news/Union%20Federations%202000-2007.htm>
- Haar, J. M., & O'Driscoll, M. P. (2005). Exploring gender differences in employee attitudes towards work-family practices and use of work-family practices. *Equal Opportunities International* , 24 (3/4), 86-98.
- Hart, J. (2003). Organisational orienteering: Charting the terrain. *American Communication Journal*, 6(2).
- Herlofsky, W. J. (2003). What you see is what you get: Iconicity and metaphor in the visual language of written and signed poetry. In W. G. Müller, & O. Fischer (Eds.), *From sign to signing: Iconicity in language and literature 3* (pp. 41 - 62). Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V.
- Hoel, H., & Beale, D. (2006). Workplace bullying, psychological perspectives and industrial relations: Towards a contextualized and interdisciplinary approach. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* , 44 (2), 239-262.
- Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. L. (2000). *Destructive conflict and bullying at work*. Manchester School of Management. Manchester: UMIST.
- Hoel, H., Cooper, C. L., & Faragher, B. (2001). The experience of bullying in Great Britain: the impact of organizational status. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10 (4), 443-465.
- Hoel, H., & Einarsen S. (2010). Shortcomings of antibullying regulations: The case of Sweden. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 19 (1), 30-50.
- Hofstede. (1984). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. H. (1993). Cultural constraints in management theories. *Academy of Management Executive*, 7 (1), 81-94.
- Höpfl, H. (2005). The organisation and the Mouth of Hell. *Culture and Organization*, 11 (3), 167-179.
- Hunter, A., Lusardi, P., Zucker, D., Jacelon, C., & Chandler, G. (2002). Making

- meaning: The creative component in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12, 388-398.
- Huq, R. (2004). International perspectives on workplace diversity. In M. S. Stockdale, & F. J. Crosby, *The psychology and management of workplace diversity* (pp. 277-298). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Jehn, K. A. (1997). Affective and cognitive conflict in work groups: Increasing performance through value-based intragroup conflict. In C. K. Dreu, & E. v. Vliert, *Using Conflict in Organizations* (pp. 87-100). London: Sage Publications.
- Keashly, L. (1998). Emotional abuse in the workplace: Conceptual and empirical issues. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 1 (1), 85-117.
- Keashly, L. (2001). Interpersonal and systemic aspects of emotional abuse at work: The target's perspective. *Violence & Victims*, 16 (3), 233-268.
- Keashly, L., & Jagatic, K. (2003). By any other name: American perspective on workplace bullying. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. Cooper, *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Konrad, A. M., Prasad, P., & Pringle, J. K. (2006). *Handbook of workplace diversity*. London: Sage.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1997). Metaphors we live by. In J. O'Brien (Ed.), *The Production of Reality: Essays and readings on social interaction* (pp. 103-114). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. R. (2005). Metaphors we live by (1980). In J. O'Brien, *The production of reality: essays and readings on social interaction* (4th ed., pp. 103-114). Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Lape, P. V. (2004). The isolation metaphor in island archaeology. In S. Fitzpatrick (Ed.), *The Archaeology of Insularity: Examining the Past in Island Environments* (pp. 223-232). Greenwood Press.
- Lee, D. (2000). An analysis of workplace bullying in the UK. *Personnel Review*, 29 (5), 593.
- Lee, D. (2003, February 28). Give me an A or you're dead. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 21.

- Lewis, D. (1999). Workplace Bullying - interim findings of a study in further and higher education in Wales. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20 (1/2), 1-13.
- Lewis, D. (2001). Perceptions of bullying in organizations. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making*, 2 (1), 48-64.
- Lewis, D., & Gunn, R. (2007). Workplace bullying in the public sector: Understanding the racial dimension. *Public Administration*, 85 (3), 641-665.
- Lewis, S. E. (2006). Recognition of workplace bullying: A qualitative study of women targets in the public sector. *Journal of Community and Applied Psychology*, 119-135.
- Leymann, H. (1990). Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. *Violence and Victims*, 5 (2), 119-126.
- Leymann, H. (1996). The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 165-184.
- Leymann, H., & Gustafsson, A. (1996). Mobbing at work and the development of post-traumatic stress disorders. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (2), 251-275.
- Liefooghe, A. P., & Mackenzie Davey, K. (2001). Accounts of workplace bullying: The role of the organization. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10 (4), 375-392.
- Lutgen-Sandvik, P. (2003). The communicative cycle of employee emotional abuse. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 16 (4), 471-501.
- Lutgen-Sandvik, P. E. (2006). Take this job and...: Quitting and other forms of resistance to workplace bullying. *Communication Monographs*, 73 (4), 406-433.
- Lutgen-Sandvik, P., Tracy, S. J., & Alberts, J. K. (2007). Burned by bullying in the American workplace: Prevalence, perception, degree and impact. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44 (6), 837-862.
- Martin, J., & Frost, P. (1999). The organizational culture war games: A struggle for intellectual dominance. In S. R. Clegg, & C. Hardy (Eds.), *Studying Organization: Theory and method* (pp. 345-367). London: Sage Publications.
- Mathisen, G. E., Einarsen, S., & Mykletun, R. (2008). The occurrences and

- correlates of bullying and harassment in the restaurant sector.  
*Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 49, 59-68.
- Matthiesen, S. B., & Einarsen, S. (2001). MMPI-2 configurations among victims of bullying at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10 (4), 467–484.
- Mayer, B. S. (2004). *Beyond neutrality: Confronting the crisis in conflict resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- McMillan Dictionary Thesaurus*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 10, 2010, from McMillan Dictionary Thesaurus: [http://www.macmillandictionary.com/thesaurus/british/desert-island/desert-island\\_4/Islands](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/thesaurus/british/desert-island/desert-island_4/Islands)
- Mikkelsen, E. G., & Einarsen, S. (2001). Bullying in Danish work-life: Prevalence and health co-relates. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10 (4), 393-413.
- Mikkelsen, E. G., & Einarsen, S. (2002). Relationships between exposure to bullying at work and psychological and psychosomatic health complaints: The role of state negative affectivity and generalized self-efficacy. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 379-405.
- Miller, L. L. (1997). Not just weapons of the weak: Gender harassment as a form of protest for army men. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60 (1), 32-51.
- Mione, P. (n.d.). *Job Enrichment*. Retrieved January 2, 2011, from Edweb San Diego State University: [http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/ARossett/pie/Interventions/jobdesign\\_1.htm](http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/ARossett/pie/Interventions/jobdesign_1.htm)
- Morgan, G. (1980). Paradigms, metaphors, and puzzle solving in organization theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25 (4), 605-622.
- Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Mumby, D. K. (2005). Theorizing resistance in organization studies A dialectical approach. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19 (1), 19-44.
- Namie, G., & Namie, R. (2000). *The bully at work*. Naperville: Sourcebooks.
- National Bullying Helpline. (2010). *National Bullying Helpline Events*. Retrieved June 20, 2010, from National Bullying Helpline: <http://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/news.htm>
- Needham, A. W. (2003). *Workplace bullying - The costly business secret*.

Auckland: Penguin Books.

- Niedl, K. (1996). Mobbing and well-being: Economic and personnel development implications. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (2), 239-249.
- Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2008). Sampling in research on interpersonal aggression. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 34, 265-272.
- Nielsen, M. B., Matthiesen, S. B., Hetland, J., & Einarsen, S. (2008). Workplace bullying, mental health and job satisfaction: Findings from a longitudinal study. *6th International Conference on Workplace Bullying* (pp. 58-59). Montreal: University of Quebec in Montreal.
- Noronha, E., & D'Cruz, P. (2008). The exit coping response to workplace bullying: HRM paves the way. *6th International Conference on Workplace Bullying* (pp. 128-129). Montreal: University of Quebec in Montreal.
- Notelaers, G., Einarsen, S., de Witte, H., & Vermunt, J. K. (2006). Measuring exposure to bullying at work: The validity and advantages of the latent cluster approach. *Work & Stress*, 20, 288-301.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric Theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Oakley, A. (1988). Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts, *Doing Feminist Research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- O'Driscoll, M., Bentley, T., Trenberth, L., Cooper-Thomas, H., Gardner, D., & Catley, B. (2010a). Effectiveness of organisational strategies to combat bullying in New Zealand workplaces. *Seventh International Conference on Workplace Bullying & Harassment* (pp. 97-98). Cardiff: University of Glamorgan.
- O'Driscoll, M., Trenberth, L., Bentley, T., Catley, B., Cooper-Thomas, H., & Gardner, D. (2010b). Developing a methodology for measuring bullying and stress in New Zealand workplaces. *Seventh International Conference on Workplace Bullying & Harassment* (p. 70). Cardiff: University of Glamorgan.
- O'Leary, Z. (2005). *Researching Real World Problems*. London: Sage Publications.
- Olsen, H. (2003, August). Workplace bullying - what New Zealand workplaces should know. *Human Resources*, 10-11.
- O'Moore, M., Seigne, E., McGuire, L., & Smith, M. (1998). Workplace bullying:

- Ireland. *Journal of Occupational Health & Safety Australia-NewZealand*, 14 (6), 569-574.
- Ortony, A. (1975). Why metaphors are necessary and not just nice. *Educational Theory*, 25, 450-523.
- Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS Survival Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis Using SPSS (Version 15)* (3rd ed.). Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation & research methods*. London: Sage.
- Pearson, C. M., & Porath, C. L. (2005). On the nature, consequences and remedies of workplace incivility: No time for "nice"? Think again. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19 (1), 12.
- Pietersen, C. (2007). Interpersonal bullying behaviours in the workplace. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 33 (1), 59-66.
- Putnam, L. L., Phillips, N., & Chapman, P. (1999). Metaphors of communication and organization. In S. R. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W. R. Nord, *Managing organizations: Current issues* (pp. 125-158). London: Sage Publications.
- Quine, L. (1999, April 13). Workplace bullying in NHS community trust: staff questionnaire survey. *British Medical Journal*.
- Ramsey, R. D. (2002). Bullies in the workplace. *SuperVision*, 63 (3), 3-5.
- Randall, P. (1997). *Adult bullying*. London: Routledge.
- Rayner, C. (1997). The incidence of workplace bullying. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 7, 199-208.
- Rayner, C. (1999). From Research to Implementation: finding leverage for prevention. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20 (1/2), 28.
- Rayner, C., & Cooper, C. (1997). Workplace bullying: Myth or reality - can we afford to ignore it? *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 18 (4), 211.
- Rayner, C., & Cooper, C. (2003). The black hole in 'bullying at work' research. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making*, 4 (1), 47-64.
- Rayner, C., Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. (2002). *Workplace bullying: What we know, who is to blame, and what we can do about it?* London: Taylor Francis.
- Ricketta, M. (2008). The causal relation between job attitudes and performance: A meta analysis of panel studies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 (2), 472-481.
- Rogers, J. K. (2000). *Temps: the many faces of the changing workplace*. Ithaca:

Cornell University Press.

- Ryan, A. B. (2006). Post-positivist approaches to research. In A. B. Ryan, *Research and writing your thesis: A guide for post-graduate students* (pp. 12-26). Maynooth: MACE.
- Sackmann, S. (1989). The role of metaphors in organizational transformation. *Human Relations, 42* (6), 463-485.
- Salin, D. (2003a). Bullying and organizational politics in competitive and rapidly changing work environments. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making, 4* (1), 35-46.
- Salin, D. (2003b). Ways of explaining workplace bullying: A review of enabling, motivating and precipitating structures and processes in the work environment. *Human Relations, 56* (10), 1213-1232.
- Salin, D. (2008). The prevention of workplace bullying as a question of human resource management: Measures adopted and underlying organizational factors. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 24*, 221-231.
- Salin, D. (2009). Organisational responses to workplace harassment. *Personnel Review, 38* (1), 26-44.
- Schaubroeck, J., Walumbwa, F. O., Ganster, D. C., & Kepes, S. (2007). Destructive leader traits and the neutralizing influence of an "enriched" job. *The Leadership Quarterly, 18*, 236-251.
- Schleicher, D. J., Watt, J. D., & Greguras, G. J. (2004). Reexamining the job satisfaction–performance relationship: The complexity of attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(1), 165–177.
- Schon, D. A. (1979). Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-setting in social policy. In A. Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 254-283). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schultz, M., & Hatch, M. J. (1996). Living with multiple paradigms: The case of paradigm interplay in organizational culture studies. *Academy of Management Review, 21* (2), 529-557.
- Shallcross, L. Z. (2003, November). The pecking order: Workplace mobbing in the public sector. *Master of Public Sector Management (Honours) Thesis*. Australia: Griffith University.
- Shallcross, L., Ramsey, S., & Barker, M. (2008). Workplace mobbing: Expulsion,

- exclusion, and transformation. *ANZAM: Managing in the Pacific Century* (pp. 2-22). Auckland: The University of Auckland Business School.
- Sheehan, M., Barker, M., & McCarthy, P. (2004). Analysing metaphors used by victims of workplace bullying. *International Journal of Management and Decision Making*, 5 (1), 21-34.
- Spector, P. E., Cooper, C. L., Poelmans, S., Allen, T. D., O'Driscoll, M., Sanchez, J. I., et al. (2004). A cross-national comparative study of work-family stressors, working hours, and well-being: China and Latin America versus the Anglo world. *Personnel Psychology*, 57, 119-142.
- Standen, P., & Omari, M. (2009). Psychological Warfare: The destructive cycle of reciprocal bullying at work. *New Zealand Journal of Human Resource Management*, 4-13.
- Statistics New Zealand. (n.d.). *2006 Census*. Retrieved April 18, 2010, from Statistics New Zealand: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage.aspx>
- Statistics New Zealand. (2005). *Labour Market Statistics*. Retrieved from Statistics New Zealand.
- Statistics New Zealand. (2007). *Quickstats about Maori: Census 2006. Revised 27 March 2007*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.
- Steger, T. (2007). The Stories Metaphors Tell: Metaphors as a tool to decipher tacit aspects in narratives. *Field Methods*, 19 (1), 3-23.
- Stevens, S. (2002). Nursing workforce retention: challenging a bullying culture. *Health Affairs*, 21 (5), 189-193.
- Stohl, C., & Schell, S. E. (1991). A communication-based model of small-group dysfunction. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 5 (1), 90-110.
- Storm, C., & Storm, T. (1987). A taxonomic study of the vocabulary of emotions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53 (4), 805-816.
- Thirlwall, A., & Haar, J. (2010a). Bullying in New Zealand: Comparing NAQ findings to other international settings. *Seventh International Conference on Workplace Bullying & Harassment* (pp. 201-215). Cardiff: University of Glamorgan.
- Thirlwall, A., & Haar, J. (2010b). Bullying in New Zealand: Comparing NAQ findings to USA and European studies. *New Zealand Journal of Human Resources Management*, 10 (2), 99-115.

- Thompson, L., Nalder, J., & Lount Jr, R. B. (2006). Judgemental biases in conflict resolution and how to overcome them. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, & E. C. Marcus, *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 243-267). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tracy, S. J., Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Alberts, J. K. (2006). Nightmares, demons, and slaves: Exploring the painful metaphors of workplace bullying. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20 (2), 148-185.
- van Saane, N., Sluiter, J. K., Verbeek, J. H., & Frings-Dresen, M. H. (2003). Reliability and validity of instruments measuring job satisfaction- a systematic review. *Occupational Medicine*, 53 (3), 191-200.
- Vartia, M. (1996). The sources of bullying - psychological work environment and organizational climate. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (1), 203-214.
- Visser, J. (2006, January). Union membership statistics in 24 countries. *Monthly Labor Review*, 38 - 49.
- Wager, N., Fieldman, G., & Hussey, T. (2003). The effect on ambulatory blood pressure of working under favourably and unfavourably perceived supervisors. *Occupational Environment Medicine*, 60, 468-474.
- Waldron, V. R. (2000). Relational experiences and emotions at work. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *Emotion in Organizations* (2nd ed., pp. 64-82). London: Sage.
- Welbourne, T. M., Johnson, D. E., & Erez, A. (1998). The role-based performance scale: Validity analysis of a theory-based measure. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41, 540-555.
- Wilkinson, P. R. (2002). *Thesaurus of traditional English metaphors* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Williams, K. D. (2001). *Ostracism*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Williams, K. D. (2008). Ostracism versus bullying: A question of being worthy of attention. *6th International Conference on Workplace Bullying: Sharing our knowledge* (p. 1). Montreal: UQAM.
- Yamada, D. (2010). Workplace Bullying and the Law, 2000-2010: A Global Assessment. *7th International Conference on Bullying and Harassment at Work*. Cardiff: University of Glamorgan.
- Yildirim, E., & Suayyip, C. (2008). The impact of EU accession on Turkish

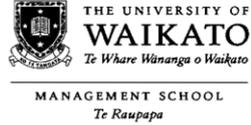
- industrial relations and social dialogue. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 39 (3), 212-228.
- Zapf, D. (1999). Organizational, workgroup related and personal causes of mobbing/bullying at work. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20 (1/2), 70.
- Zapf, D., & Einarsen, S. (2003). Individual antecedents of bullying: Victims and perpetrators. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: International perspectives in research and practice* (pp. 165-184). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Zapf, D., Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Vartia, M. (2003). Empirical findings on bullying in the workplace. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. L. Cooper, *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace: International perspectives in research and practice* (pp. 103-126). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Zapf, D., Knorz, C., & Kulla, M. (1996). On the relationship between mobbing factors, and job content, Social Work Environment, and Health Outcomes. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (2), 215-237.
- Zimbardo, P. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect*. New York: Random House.
- Zorn, T. E., (1995). Bosses and buddies: A constructive/dramaturgical analysis of simultaneously close and hierarchical relationships in organizations. In J. T. Wood & S. Duck, *Under-Studied Relationships: Off the Beaten Track*, (pp. 122-147). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zorn, T. E., Roper, J., Weaver, C. K., & Broadfoot, K. (2004). *Effects of Focus Group Participation on Changes in Attitudes and Communicative Self-Efficacy*. University of Waikato.

# Appendices

## *Appendix A: Ethics approval*

**Research Office**  
Waikato Management School  
The University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton 3240  
New Zealand

Amanda Sircombe  
Research Manager  
Phone +64 7 838 4376  
Fax +64 7 838 4063  
Email [amandas@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:amandas@waikato.ac.nz)  
[www.management.ac.nz](http://www.management.ac.nz)



1<sup>st</sup> November 2006

Alison Thirlwall  
C/- Mike Thirlwall  
PO Box 28444  
Dubai  
United Arab Emirates

Dear Alison

*Ethical Application WMS 06/119*  
*Adult bullying at work: A study of the impact of adult bullying in New Zealand Tertiary Education Institutions and its implications for management communication.*

As per my earlier email the above research project has been granted Ethical Approval for Research by the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee.

Best wishes for your research

Regards,



Amanda Sircombe  
Research Manager  
Waikato Management School

## *Appendix B: Interview guide*

### **Proposed Question Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews**

#### **1. Initial Question:**

- Tell me about the bullying situation you experienced

#### **2. Possible Follow-up Questions:**

##### a. Experience

- Tell me more about the specifics of that situation (who, what, where, when, why, and how?)
- What did you do about it?
- How did you cope?
- How did it affect your work, relationships, health etc?
- Has anything similar happened before?

##### b. Feelings

- How did you feel about the experience(s)?
- How do you think others feel?
- Why do you think that you were upset/bothered?

##### c. Descriptions

- Metaphors – It was like (e.g., a nightmare)...it was as if (e.g., I didn't exist)...I was treated like (e.g., a slave)

##### d. Knowledge

- If you knew then, what you know now, what would you do?
- What could have helped you in the situation?
- What advice do you have for others?
- How have you changed?

##### e. Wishes

- If you could have anything, what would you like happen as a result of this experience?

*Appendix C: Survey questions*

**New Zealand Negative Acts Questionnaire.**

**Part 1 - About you**

Plases provide some information about yourself. This information will not be used to identify you.

**1.1 Are you** Male Female?

**1.2 Into which age range do you fit?** 20 or under,  
21 to 30 31 to 40 41 to 50 51 to 60 60 plus

**1.3 How do you describe your nationality?**

New Zealand European New Zealand Maori Australian  
European Asian North American South American  
African, Other (please specify).....

**1.4 What is your current relationship status?** Single

Married Separated Divorced De facto (living together but not  
married to each other) Other (please specify).....

**Part 2 - Your job**

**2.1. Where do you work?**

At an Institute of Technology or Polytechnic in New Zealand.  
At a university in New Zealand.  
At a private training establishment in New Zealand.  
Other (please specify).....

**2.2 What type of work do you do?**

Academic (e.g., lecturer, tutor, a teacher etc)/  
Management (academic, e.g., Chair, Head of School, Dean)/  
Management (non-academic)/Administration/Librarian/Technician/  
Maintenance/Support services/Other (please specify).....

**2.3 What sort of employment contract do you have?**

Tenured (i.e., continuing or permanent) Limited term contract  
Casual Other (please specify).....

**2.4 Are you contracted work** Full-time/Part-time/Other (please specify)?

### **Part 3 - Job satisfaction and productivity.**

The following questions relate to job satisfaction in your current position.  
Please select the answer that best represents your view.

*Very satisfied/satisfied/fairly satisfied/neither satisfied nor dissatisfied/  
fairly dissatisfied/dissatisfied/very dissatisfied*

- 3.1 How satisfied you that the quality of supervision you receive?
- 3.2 How satisfied are you with the communication at your place of work (e.g., keeping you informed, feedback)?
- 3.3 How satisfied are you with your co-workers?
- 3.4 How satisfied are you with the meaningfulness of the tasks in your job?
- 3.5 Overall how satisfied are you with your job?

### **How productive are you at work?**

Select the answer that best represents your view.

*Strongly agree/agree/mildly agree/neither agree nor disagree/  
mildly disagree/disagree/strongly disagree*

- 3.6. I work hard at my job
- 3.7. My job performance is the best it has ever been
- 3.8 I could work much harder at my job that I actually do
- 3.9. The quality of my work is excellent
- 3.10. I am motivated to achieve excellence in my current job

### **Part 4 - Negative behavior and conflict at work**

The following are often seen as examples of negative behaviours in the workplace. How often have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work?

Please select the answer that best corresponds with your experience in the past six months:

*Never/occasionally/monthly/weekly/daily*

- 4.1 Someone withholding information which affects your performance
- 4.2 Receiving unwanted sexual attention
- 4.3 Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work
- 4.4 Being ordered to work below your level of competence
- 4.5 Having key areas of responsibility removed and replaced with trivial or unpleasant tasks
- 4.6 Being the subject of gossip and rumours

- 4.7 Being ignored and/or excluded from groups, conversations, events etc.
- 4.8 Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you as a person (i.e., habits and background), your attitudes or your private life
- 4.9 Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger or rage
- 4.10 Receiving intimidating behavior such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking/barring the way.
- 4.11 Receiving hints or signals from others that you should leave your job
- 4.12 Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse.
- 4.13 Being given repeated reminders of your errors and mistakes.
- 4.14 Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach people.
- 4.15 Receiving persistent criticism of your work and effort.
- 4.16 Having your opinions and views ignored.
- 4.17 Receiving insulting messages, telephone calls and/or e-mails.
- 4.18 Being subjected to practical jokes carried out by people you don't get on with.
- 4.19 Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description (e.g., private errands).
- 4.20 Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines.
- 4.21 Having unfair allegations made against you.
- 4.22 Being subjected to excessive monitoring of your work.
- 4.23 Receiving offensive remarks or behavior related to race or ethnicity.
- 4.24 Being pressured not to claim something which you are entitled to receive (e.g., sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses).
- 4.25 Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm.
- 4.26 Receiving threats of making your life difficult (e.g., overtime, night work, unpopular tasks, contract not renewed).
- 4.27 Having attempts made to find fault with your work.
- 4.28 Being given an unmanageable workload.
- 4.29 Being moved or transferred against your will.

### **Part 5 – Workplace bullying**

For the purpose of this study, bullying is defined as:

*A process in which a person, or several people, repeatedly perceived themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one person, or several people, especially where the target or targets of bullying have difficulty defending themselves against these actions. Single incidents are not considered to be bullying in the research.*

Using the definition above please state whether you've been bullied at work in the last six months.

*No/Yes, but rarely/Yes, occasionally/Yes, several times per month/  
Yes, several times per week/Yes, daily*

## *Appendix D: Information sheet for survey*

### **Adult Bullying Research Project Information Sheet For Website**

#### Overview

I am a PhD student at the Waikato University Management School. I am seeking information about bullying amongst adults at work in order to gain a greater understanding of how it affects people in the workplace and what is done to manage it.

#### Who's responsible?

My name is Alison Thirlwall. I am a mature student. You can email me at [att3@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:att3@students.waikato.ac.nz) or call me on 00971 50322 9352. My supervisor is Prof. Ted Zorn and he can be contacted by email at [tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz) or telephone: 07 838 4776.

#### What will you have to do and how long will it take

You are requested to complete an online questionnaire. It is confidential and there is no way that you will be identified from the information you provide. The questionnaire should take 10 to 15 minutes.

#### What will happen to the information collected?

The information you provide will be analysed to enable me to write a description of bullying at work and the extent to which tertiary education institutes are affected. Only my supervisor, a typist and I will be privy to the results of the questionnaire and the paper written. The typist will sign a confidentiality statement prior to being given access to the materials. Afterwards, the results of the questionnaire will be stored in a secure place until the research is complete and will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

#### Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

Please note that completing the questionnaire is considered consent for the information to be used in the study and, owing to the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, the information you provide cannot be returned or excluded if you subsequently change your mind about participating.

At the end of the questionnaire, you will be reminded about consent and have the opportunity to choose not to participate at that point.

## *Appendix E: Information sheet for interviewees*

### **Adult Bullying Research Project Information Sheet For Interviewees**

#### Overview

I am a PhD student at the Waikato University Management School. I am seeking information about bullying amongst adults at work in order to gain a greater understanding of how it affects people in the workplace and what is done to manage it.

#### Who's responsible?

My name is Alison Thirlwall. I am a mature student. You can email me at [att3@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:att3@students.waikato.ac.nz) or call me on 00971 50322 9352. My supervisor is Prof. Ted Zorn and he can be contacted by email at [tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz) or telephone: 07 838 4776.

#### What will you have to do and how long will it take

I would like to meet with you to hear about your experiences of bullying at work, what happened, how it affected you, plus anything else you would like to add. The talk should take no longer than 2 hours and be conducted in a place that allows some privacy.

#### What will happen to the information collected?

The information you provide will be used by me to write a description of bullying at work. As I will be interviewing around thirty people, your comments will be combined with theirs to try to gain a better understanding of the experience of bullying. Only my supervisor, a typist and I will be privy to the notes, tapes and the paper written. The typist will sign a confidentiality statement prior to being given access to the materials. Afterwards, notes and tapes will be stored in a secure place until the research is complete and will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in research reports unless explicit consent has been given, and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

#### Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Ask any further questions about the study, which occur to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

*Appendix F: Information sheet for HR workers*

**Adult Bullying Research Project Information Sheet  
For HR workers**

Overview

I am a PhD candidate at the Waikato University Management School. I am seeking information about bullying amongst adults at work in order to gain a greater understanding of how it affects the workplace and what is done to manage it.

Who's responsible?

My name is Alison Thirlwall. I am a mature student. You can email me at [att3@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:att3@students.waikato.ac.nz) and call or text me on 00971 50322 9352. My supervisor is Professor Ted Zorn and he can be contacted by email at [tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz) or telephone: 07 838 4776.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

I would like to talk with you about what your organisation considers bullying and how the phenomenon is viewed, plus any strategies you have used to manage cases. If you have copies of policies or other documents I take these would be appreciated. The talk should take between one and two hours. If you agree, I would like to use a voice recorder.

What will happen to the information collected?

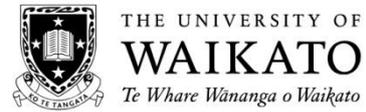
The survey or interview responses will be used by me to write a descriptive of the organisation's approach to bullying. Only my supervisor, a typist and I will be privy to the notes, recordings and anything confidential that you provide. The typist will sign a confidentiality statement prior to being given access to the materials. Afterwards, questionnaires, notes and recordings will be stored in a secure place until the research is complete and will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in research reports, and every effort will be made to disguise their identity and that of their organisation.

Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Ask any further questions about the study, which occur to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

*Appendix G: Consent form*



Adult bullying at work: A study of the impact of adult bullying in New Zealand Tertiary Education Institutes and its implications for management communication.

*Consent Form for Participants*

*I have read the Information Sheet for participants for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.*

*I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the Information Sheet.*

*I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet form.*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Researcher's name and contact information:***

Alison Thirlwall  
Email: [att3@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:att3@students.waikato.ac.nz)  
Telephone: 00971 5032 29352

**Supervisor's Name and contact information:**

Prof Ted Zorn  
Email: [tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tzorn@mngt.waikato.ac.nz)  
Telephone: 07 838 4776