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Article

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ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND WORKPLACE BULLYING IN SELECTED SMALL-SCALE BUSINESSES IN IKEJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Workplace bullying remains a persistent organisational challenge that undermines employee well-being, productivity, and overall organisational effectiveness, particularly within small-scale business environments where formal human resource structures are often weak. This study examined the relationship between organisational culture and workplace bullying among selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between person-related bullying and organisational culture, as well as work-related bullying and organisational culture. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to employees across selected small-scale businesses. A total of 146 questionnaires were distributed, while 131 valid responses were used for analysis. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant negative relationship between person-related bullying and organisational culture, indicating that stronger organisational cultures are associated with reduced interpersonal bullying behaviours. Similarly, a significant negative relationship was found between work-related bullying and organisational culture, suggesting that supportive organisational environments discourage work-related forms of bullying. It was concluded that organisational culture plays a critical role in shaping workplace behaviour and mitigating bullying in small-scale businesses. It recommended the promotion of ethical leadership, clear anti-bullying policies, employee training, and participatory management practices to strengthen organisational culture and reduce workplace bullying.

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The study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical evidence from a developing economy context and highlights organisational culture as a key determinant of workplace behavioural outcomes.

Keywords: Organisational Culture, Workplace Bullying, Person-Related Bullying, Work-Related Bullying, and Small-Scale Businesses.

Introduction

Workplace is interrelated with employee well-being and this is because both concepts touch deep on personal feelings. In the same vein, workplace bullying is synonymous with organisational related factors, which associates primarily with organisational culture. Several factors have been identified as contributory factors to workplace bullying majority, which are perceived to have emanated from poor management of conflict and work organisation, competitive and hectic terrain of work, stressful environment of work and destructive leadership styles through poor communication, which thus results into an unfavorable organisational climate (Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper & Einarsen, 2010). Workplace bullying is a cardinal and sensitive issue being faced virtually in all segments of organisations today with great effects on the productivity and health of employees. A study by Alam and Abdin (2022) expressed that organisations in the United States lost over \$300 billion on an annual basis because of loss emanating from employees' productivity arising from bullying. In contrast to the above, it is considerably high in the United Kingdom with about \$600 billion. In a similar manner, 23 percent of employees in the United Kingdom, 25 percent in the United States and 37 percent in Australia have experienced bullying at their respective workplaces (Vranjes, Salin & Baillien, 2022b). Bullying represents the exploitation of subordinates, co-workers, or seniors in a hierarchy on a regular basis, which leads to adverse consequences such as psychological, social and physical effects on the victims (Einarsen, 2020). In further conceptualising workplace bullying, Taris (2022) further argued that bullying is a time-dependent and contextual phenomenon. According to Vranjes, Notelaers and Salin, (2022a), the initial process of the perpetrator of bullying first shows a form of mild encroachment and aggression, which layer turns into a hard line form of aggression, which with time becomes more intense and explicit.

Workplace bullying is ubiquitous and inherent in virtually all segments of the organisation and manifests in terms of hostility, which consequently affects certain persons or groups particularly, the minorities (Scott, Klein, & Onovakpuri, 2017). Several studies exploring on the adverse and dysfunctional effects of regular forms of exploitations from diverse lenses, ranging from anxiety by Rai and Agarwal, (2018), post-traumatic stress by (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2002), turnover intentions by Djurkovic, McCormack and Casimir, (2018), propensity to leave due to depression (Naseer, Raja & Donia, 2016). Therefore, in coping with the negative effects of the above, investigations have been made by several studies to examine the determinants of bullying at the workplace. Even though these determinants ranges from individually-specific, team-related and organizational related factors of bullying. The onus of arguments of these studies points to the fact that organisational culture and its components primarily act as both barriers and opportunities for bullying. For instance, Rai and Agarwal, (2018) were of the opinion that individual and team-related constituents are catalysts of organisational culture and its factors or components to either encourage or hinder bullying. The hallmark of this submission is that both individuals and team-related factors are products of the overall organisational climate,

which either supports or prevent bullying. Based on the above arguments, this study examines organisational culture and workplace bullying in selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying at the workplace is a challenge, which results in draining the human capital physically and emotionally which have attendant consequences and further establish an environment of work filled with great toxicity. The presence of workplace bullying be it at personal or organisational level is becoming more widely acknowledged to stem from issue revolving around sexual harassment (Lieberman, 2017). According to Townsend & Deprez, (2018), the motivation towards confronting bullying in the workplace extended to other organisations as a result of bullying being viewed as a pattern of behavior which could lead to damaging consequences such as sexual harassment. In many workplaces, bullying created with the belief that mal-treatment would go without any form of punishment (Townsend & Deprez, 2018, p. 23). Indeed, over the past decades, several studies centered on the investigation of the negative consequences of bullying not only have placed primacy on health and wellness of employees, but also on the health of the organizations themselves (Rai & Upasna, 2019). Study by Tianwei and Hanson, (2018) pointed out that victims of bullying endure not only its physical consequences like heart diseases, sleeping challenges and headaches or psychological challenges such as anxiety and depression but their endurance process also include behavioural strains with examples like aggressive behaviours such as crying etc. Workplace bullying may be associated with decrease/reduction in job satisfaction, productivity loss coupled with continuous increase in the intention to leave (Robert, 2018). According to Reknas, Glambek & Einarsen, (2020), previous studies on the examination of bullying from the angle of the intention to leave as well as consequences of turnover based on workplace bullying, it was found that bullying situation increases due to Managerial deficiencies via organisational culture. From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that whether individuals experience personal or workplace bullying, it is a reflection of deficiencies emanating from the views of managers and leaders to conduct, organise and address bullying incidents (Hurley, Hutchinson, Bradbury & Browne, 2016). Based on these arguments, this study examined organisational culture and workplace bullying among selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Research Objectives

Generally, the main objective of this study was aimed at investigating organisational culture and workplace bullying in selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria. However, other objectives are, to:

- i. investigate the relationship between organisational culture and person-related bullying in selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria;
- ii. examine the relationship between organisational culture and work-related bullying in selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between person-related bullying and organisational culture of selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between work-related bullying and organisational culture of selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Workplace Bullying: Workplace bullying denotes a systematic exposure to behaviours that are negative in the workplace over a period of time, which can also be extended; it is a situation where the exposed victims have no possibilities for self-defense (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2020). Diverse definitions exist in explaining workplace bullying. In a simple term, workplace bullying means breaching purposefully the space of an individual's rights, integrity and dignity. According to Anjum & Muazzam, (2018), workplace bullying implies a form of harassment or exclusion of individuals in a socially and negative manner which has a dysfunctional consequence on both personal and work related tasks. Visvizi, Lytras & Daniela, (2018) explained workplace bullying as a process which escalates the inability of an individual to control negative acts as well as repeated attempts aimed at undermining their personality and integrity; this may manifest in the form of name calling and excessive monitoring of activities or tasks. These definitions clearly reflect that there is a consensus as to what bullying represents from different scholars, as majority of definitions view it as a negative behaviour, situation or occurrence (Olanipekun & Ikechukwu, 2022). Furthermore, several degrees of researches have demonstrated that workplace bullying can lead to a fall and reduction in job satisfaction and increased rate of burnout (Chowdhury, Sunna, Das & Kabir, 2021). This negative situation thus becomes a systematic target of incongruent social behaviours (Salin & Hoel, 2020). In the workplace, bullies consistently engage in harmful behaviours, this stems from behaviours for power using abuses, intimidation, embarrassments, threats, manipulations as well as engaging obstructive behavioural pattern through failure to communicate overtime (Salin, 2021). Workplace bullying is a serious social challenge which has been a contemporary topic in several studies and debates, and no organisation is spared of its manifestation as workplace bullying is inherent in virtually every organisation be it in the healthcare, banking or educational sector (Jones, 2017). Continuous exposure to events of stressful nature as a result of bullying from the workplace is connected with increased risk of cardiovascular disease such as hypertension (Sauer and McCoy, (2017); as well as mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder which can even lead to suicide (Kabir, Chowdhury, Tonmon, Roy, Akter & Bhuya, 2022).

Work-Related Bullying: Work-Related Bullying which is also referred to as institutional bullying occur when the practices, values and culture of an organisation allows for and create room for behaviour(s) that causes undue stress to individuals or groups of persons without taking cognizant of their well-being. Work-related bullying is a culture, structure and practices, which poses unreasonable burden on employees with concerns towards organisational prosperity and profit and little protection on employees' mental health or well-being (Kabir, Chowdhury, Tonmon, Roy, Akter & Bhuya, 2022). Work-related bullying takes place when less importance is placed on individual or group of employees through unfair practices like unrealistic deadlines, impossible targets, and continuous uncontrollable workloads all of which have huge effects on employees' performance, commitment and job satisfaction. Bullying has been defined as all those repeated actions and practices that are directed to one or more workers, which are unwanted by the victim, which may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence and distress, and that may interfere with work performance and cause an unpleasant working environment (Einarsen & Raknes, 2017). Work related bullying behaviors are giving unachievable task,

impossible deadlines, unmanageable workloads, meaningless task or supplying unclear information, threat about security etc. (Beswick, Gore, Palferman, 2016)

Person-Related Bullying: This form of bullying is regarded as a kind of stressful process that is capable of causing negative effects on employees' health, with huge potentiality of leading to symptoms that are psychophysical such as alterations of personality and mood, psychiatric disorders like anxiety, depression/disorder, chronic adjustment disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Behaviours revolving around person related bullying manifests in form of public humiliation, ignoring, insulting, spreading of gossips and rumours, intruding on individuals' privacy, yelling etc. (Beswick, Gore, Palferman, 2016). Person-related bullying refers to hostile behaviours directed at an employee's identity, personality, or social relations rather than their job tasks. It involves repeated interpersonal aggression such as insults, ridicule, humiliation, gossip, social exclusion, intimidation, and offensive remarks, which gradually undermine the victim's dignity and psychological well-being. Unlike task-related conflicts, person-related bullying is often personal in nature and targets who the employee is rather than what the employee does. According to workplace bullying scholarship, person-related bullying is a core dimension of mobbing and psychological harassment, where repeated negative actions create a hostile work environment that can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, and reduced job satisfaction (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). It is often sustained over time and involves a power imbalance that makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves effectively. Research also shows that person-related bullying is strongly linked to organisational culture and leadership style. In environments where disrespect, poor communication, and weak ethical standards are tolerated, such behaviours are more likely to occur and persist (Salin & Hoel, 2011). Similarly, studies indicate that hostile interpersonal behaviours negatively affect employee engagement and organisational commitment (Einarsen et al., 2020). Overall, person-related bullying is not a single isolated act but a pattern of repeated psychological aggression aimed at damaging an individual's social standing and emotional stability within the workplace.

Organisational Culture: On a general note, organisational culture can be viewed as the values, beliefs and attitudes of an organisation and how these components influence employees' behaviour. Organisational culture has an effect on how people perceive an organisation in the aspect of what it looks like to work there and how much of effects it may have in working in such organisations. Diverse factors contribute to the culture of an organisation, but there are only three crucial components, to wit; workers' conduct in the workplace, these are the attitudes, temperaments, and cohesiveness of employees, the vision and values of employees and leadership. This structure is further revealed in Lochner's (2020) three-fold method for analysing the culture of any organisation. Let us examine the first fundamental component, workers' conduct in the workplace. Lochner (2020) detailed that a method we can use to analyze organisational culture is through what we see. How employees of an organisation interact together, treat each other, value each other, esteem each other, and interact makes up their conduct, and employee conduct contributes strongly to fundamentals such as teamwork and workplace efficacy. Hastwell (2020) in an article on greatness in an organisation's culture lists community and fairness as two strong elements of a great place to work. When employees treat each other well, they form bonds of friendship which extends beyond mere co-worker relations and they develop a cohesiveness that makes them strongly effective as a team and for the organisation. The second fundamental component of organizational culture can be summed up in the attitudes, temperaments, and

cohesiveness of staff. Some aspects may seem to overlap with the first, but in fact are distinct and different. Lochner's (2020) second method for analysing culture is clarified in what is said.

Just as actions are important, so are words. This comes across in many ways such as the general attitude of individual employees, but also in the way they speak about work assignments, management, and each other. The temperament of individuals is important in how it influences the way they handle emotions, regulate their behavior, and generally, how they feel about those around them (RCN, 2020). A staff is said to work cohesively if teamwork is esteemed highly and if they communicate effectively (Gail, 2021). The third fundamental component of culture consists of the vision and values of staff and leadership. Lochner's (2020) final method for analysing culture examined these by analysing what staff believed. Coleman (2013) writes for the Harvard Business Review that corporate culture can account for thirty percent of the differential in corporate performance and places vision and values at the top of the list of elements that make up a corporation's culture. One's vision clarifies their purpose and it is important that the vision of the company, and its constituents or components, align (Coleman, 2013). Finally, people pursue the things they value and the things they believe in. If employees of a company share a common vision and common values, the team will work together more effectively since they'll be sharing in a common purpose.

Organizational Culture and Workplace Bullying: Organizational culture denotes shared suppositions, values, principles, and expectations by members of organizations that become unwritten rules and norms influencing group behaviours at place of work (Blackstock, Harlos, Macleod & Hardy, 2015). An and Kang, (2016) revealed that organisational culture is linked with workplace bullying among Korean nurses whereas a contradicting outcome was reached by Tambur & Vadi, (2019) on pro-social organisational culture. Tambur & Vadi (2019), considered organizational culture as a factor associated with workplace bullying. Bullying is construed and conceded as a problem as disparate culture types influences it, which therefore create the necessity to hypothesize certain type of organizational culture that will repress the prevalence of workplace bullying among personnel. Organisational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape how employees behave and interact within an organisation. It determines what is considered acceptable or unacceptable behaviour and influences how authority is exercised, how communication flows, and how employees relate to one another. In contrast, workplace bullying refers to repeated negative actions such as humiliation, intimidation, exclusion, or work-related harassment that harm an employee's dignity, health, and job performance.

The relationship between organisational culture and workplace bullying is well established in organisational behaviour literature. Organisational culture can either enable or discourage bullying behaviours depending on whether it promotes respect, fairness, and accountability or tolerates aggression and power abuse. According to Salin and Hoel (2011), organisational structures and cultural norms play a critical role in shaping the likelihood of bullying, as weak or toxic cultures often allow aggressive behaviours to persist unchecked. Similarly, Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (2011) argue that workplace bullying is not only an individual issue but also a reflection of organisational systems and cultural deficiencies. Research also shows that supportive and ethical organisational cultures reduce bullying by promoting psychological safety and encouraging reporting of abusive behaviours (Einarsen et al., 2020). In such environments, employees are more likely to experience respect, inclusion, and fairness, which discourages both person-related and work-related bullying

behaviours. Overall, organisational culture serves as a foundational determinant of workplace behaviour, influencing whether bullying is prevented, ignored, or unintentionally encouraged within organisations.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Power: Power is studied in the social, political, management and physical sciences. In the physical sciences, power has quite a specific meaning; it is defined as a measure of the rate at which work is done or which energy is transferred. While the notion of “force” carries over from physics, in that we often understand power in a social context to be about one person forcing their will on another; power in organisations is infinitely more complex. It can be seized, resisted, eroded, can ebb and flow; can be used both benignly and malevolently; and can be wielded by a person or group, with or without them being present. It is described as a highly contested concept with multiple meanings, including being visible, hidden and invisible (Gaventa, 1980), or as acknowledged by Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, (2005) it works best when seen least. Mintzberg describes it as a “sly and elusive phenomenon” (Mintzberg, 1983, p.14) and maintains it is experts who agonise as to what constitutes power, while ordinary people have no trouble with the concept; “they know what it means to have power and they can sense who has it” (p. 1). The findings from qualitative studies of workplace bullying would strongly support this contention.

Empirical Review

Relationship Between Person-related Bullying and Organisational Culture: Coetzee and Dyk, (2017) conducted study on relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention and the mediating effect of work engagement on this relationship. Finding from the study concluded that work related bullying and person related bullying were related to low levels of strength and commitment which results high turnover intention where work engagement acts as a partial mediator. Khalique, et al., (2018) conducted the study on the impact of workplace bullying on intention to leave, task performance, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction. Results conclude that their significant impact of workplace bullying on intention to leave, task performance and perceived organizational support did not mediate the relationship. Yoo and Lee, (2018) conducted the study on relationship between workplace bullying and employees’ well-being which includes occupational health and quality of life. This study also examines whether work family conflict mediate this association or not. To analyze the data multiple mediation analysis was used to analyze the data. Results concludes that Employees have low level of occupational health and lower levels of quality of life, are more exposed to workplace bullying. This study shows that greater work to family conflict occur when more exposure to workplace bullying was associated, which results lower the occupational health and level of quality of life.

Salin and Notelaers, (2019) conducted study on witnessing workplace bullying and its effect on well-being and employees’ attitude. Through violation of psychological contract learning, this study helps to increase our understanding about the reasons of bullying that may cause negative impact for witnesses. Results concludes that witnessing bullying not necessarily produce stress outcomes but affects work-related attitudes. Results also concludes that effects of bullying not only on impacts targets but also affects the employee organization relationship. Judith (2018) with her research on the effect of organisational culture on person related bullying from the angle of “Aggressive Behaviour and hostility on job satisfaction and productivity” showed how the bullying behaviour affects an individuals’ ability to perform their jobs, which can impact the morale of employees and the financial

performances of an organization. The central findings of this study to show the frequency of workplace bullying, to examine the specific types of mistreatment and negative acts experienced by targets, to determine physical and mental stress associated with bullying, and to reveal a relationship between workplace bullying and its effect on job satisfaction and productivity. Study by Azizi, Jamaludin, Noordin, Saini, Jasmi, (2019) on organisational culture and person-related bullying found that 75% of participants reported witnessing mistreatment of co-workers throughout their careers, 47% have been bullied during their career, and 27% admitted to being a target of a bully in the last 12 months. This study also examined the most frequent negative acts by person-related bullies at the workplace as reported by the participants.

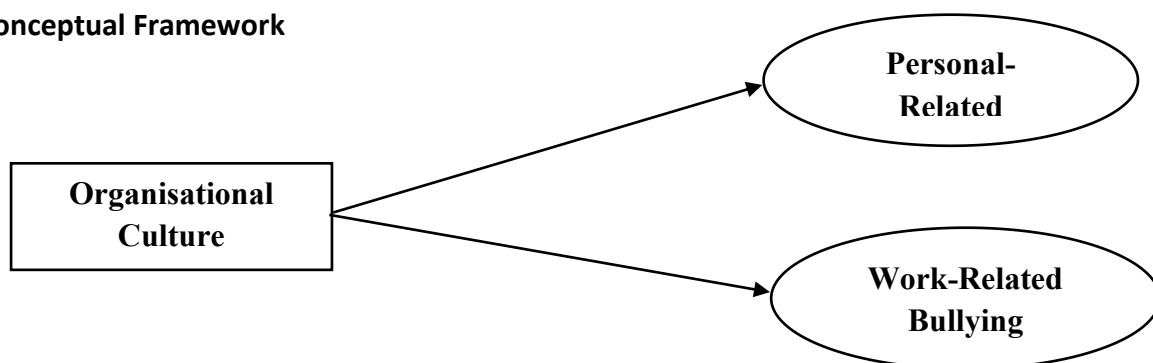
Relationship Between Work-related Bullying and Organisational Culture: Another study by Al-gharably (2014) on work-related bullying among academic and the non-academic staff at the University of Jordan found that workplace-related bullying does exist within the University. The results indicate a high percentage of participants that experience workplace-related bullying, and employees who had experienced this form of bullying reported high levels of work-related stress. Al Mualla and Hasan (2016) studied work-related bullying among nurses in public hospitals in Jordan, which revealed that 49.5% of respondents have been subjected to bullying behavior. Meanwhile, 50.5% have lower “rate of exposure” to the same negative acts within the last six months of the research. The same study Al Mualla and Hasan, 2016 yielded that 70% of nurses were bullied (394 out of 562), while 73% of those respondents stated that bullying events were witnessed by others. Furthermore, they also reported that the individuals they considered who mostly inflicted bullying behavior were those who accompanied patients (27%), physicians (23%), other nurses (19%), and nurse supervisors (11%). Gupta, Bakhshi and Einarsen, (2017) conducted study on organisational culture on work-related bullying. The aim of this study was the assessment of negative act questionnaire through reliability and validity in Indian sample. The study concludes that 46% respondents reporting the experience of bullying some time regularly some time irregularly. Duru, Ocaktam, Celen, and Orsal, (2017) conducted study on effects of organisational culture on work-related bullying with perception on employee’s psychological health. The result concludes that workplace bullying perception has significant effect on psychological symptoms such as anxiety, self- depression, hostility.

Attell, Brown and Treiber, (2017) conducted study on organisational cure using gender and race differences challenges bordering on related to workplace bullying and poor psychological conditions. The data was collected from 2010 health and retirement study. The study concludes that workplace bullying has more impact on females and persons of color, negative relationship between workplace bullying and job stressor. In addition, protective mechanism which is used to reduce the workplace bullying is supported by co-workers. Nielsen, Emberland, Stein and Knardahl, (2017) conducted the study on relationship of organisational culture and work-related bullying to all-cause disability retirement and variance in disability retirement. This study also examines gender differences in the relationship. The study concludes that there is a significance between bullying and risk of disability retirement. The study also shows that after adjusting for job demands and lack of job control, the relationship remain significant. Non bullied employees have lower risk of disability than both bullied men and women of same gender and higher risk of disability for women.

Yao, Zhang, Luo, and Huang, (2020) conducted study on workplace bullying from the impact organisational culture using employee knowledge hiding. This study also focuses on

underlying mechanism between workplace bullying and employee knowledge hiding. The results of this study conclude that there is a positive relationship between workplace bullying and employee knowledge hiding, between workplace bullying and knowledge hiding; organizational identification and emotional exhaustion. Buriro, Anand, Qureshi & Shah, (2021) Conducted study on horizontal and vertical workplace bullying which focuses on the impact of perceived organizational support and workplace bullying and their impacts on turnover intention of employees. The study concludes that superiors are more involved bullying as compared to the colleagues. It shows that perceived organizational support has more negative relationship with bullying by superiors than bullying by colleagues. It also shows that there is negative relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intention and bullying by superiors are more involved in turnover intention than by colleagues.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Authors Framework, (2026).

Methodology

Research Design: The design for this study was descriptive and method, this is because, the topic under review was explained explicitly through the gathering of information from respondents via questionnaire. The research philosophy was positivistic and the research approach was deductive in nature. This expressed why the usage of questionnaire was necessary for the study.

Population: Population of the study comprised of selected small and medium scale businesses within the Ikeja local government axis, majority of these businesses were located at the famous computer village in Ikeja and the population was two hundred and thirty-five (235); which includes male and female small and medium scale business operators.

Study Area/Location: The location selected for this study was Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State, this area was selected being one of the biggest commercial hubs under the Lagos terrain.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: From the Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) sample size determination table, the sample size for this study was one hundred and forty-six (146), which was obtained at 95% level of confidence, and 5% rate of error. The sampling technique was based on the non-probabilistic sampling technique where the purposive and convenience techniques were used. These techniques were used due to the structure of the location as well as the degree of availability of respondents.

Method of Data Collection

Data were obtained using structured questionnaire which was adapted from the scale developed by Anjum, Muazzam, Manzoor, Visvizi, Pollock and Nawaz, (2019). Workplace

Bullying Scale (WBS), which comprised of person-related and work-related bullying were employed in this study using the five point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Cronbach's alpha acquired in the present study was 0.87, and 0.77 for Person-related bullying and work-related bullying, respectively, and 0.91 for total Workplace Bullying Scale. The organisational culture questions were adapted from the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) scale developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011) based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The OCAI includes 24 questions which measure organisational culture from an individual and work-related perspective; only eight (8) questions relation to the focus of this study were selected and adapted from the scale.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained via field work were analysed using percentage and frequency tables. The stated hypotheses were examined using correlation and regression analyses respectively.

Results and Discussion

Response Rate: A total of 146 questionnaires were administered to employees of selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State. Of these, 136 questionnaires were retrieved, representing a 93.2% response rate. Following data screening for completeness and consistency, 131 questionnaires were found valid and suitable for statistical analysis, resulting in an effective response rate of 89.7%. The response rate was considered sufficiently high to provide reliable data for hypothesis testing and to support the validity of the study's findings. The remainder of the hypotheses testing and discussion remains unchanged since the statistical analyses were conducted using the 131 valid questionnaires.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the aid of SPSS Version 26 at a 5% level of significance.

Hypothesis One

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between person-related bullying and organisational culture of selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.424	0.180	0.174	4.215

Interpretation: Organisational culture explains about 18% of the variance in bullying scores.

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	502.31	1	502.31	28.54	0.000
Residual	2280.69	129	17.68		
Total	2783.00	130			

Interpretation: The regression model is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Coefficients Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	15.72	1.12		14.04	0.000
Organisational Culture	-0.42	0.08	-0.424	-5.34	0.000

Interpretation: The slope coefficient is negative (-0.42), meaning stronger organisational culture is associated with lower levels of person-related bullying. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant negative relationship between organisational culture and person-related bullying in small-scale businesses in Ikeja LGA. A healthier organisational culture reduces bullying incidents. A simple linear regression was conducted to examine whether organisational culture predicts person-related bullying among employees in selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State. Results indicated that organisational culture significantly predicted bullying, $F(1,129)=28.54, p<.001$, with an $R^2=.18$. This suggests that organisational culture accounts for approximately 18% of the variance in bullying scores. The regression equation was: $\text{Bullying}=15.72-0.42(\text{Organisational Culture})$. The slope coefficient was negative ($\beta=-0.42, p<.001$), indicating that stronger organisational culture is associated with lower levels of person-related bullying. A simple linear regression was performed to test the hypothesis that organisational culture is related to person-related bullying. The results revealed a significant negative relationship, $F(1,129)=28.54, p<.001, R^2=.18$. Organisational culture significantly predicted bullying scores ($\beta=-0.42, p<.001$), suggesting that healthier organisational cultures are associated with reduced bullying incidents. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between work-related bullying and organisational culture of selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Variables	Work-related Bullying	Organisational Culture
Work-related Bullying	1	-0.36**
Organisational Culture	-0.36**	1

N = 131, $r = -0.36, p < .001$

The correlation coefficient ($r=-0.36$) indicates a moderate negative relationship between organisational culture and work-related bullying. Since $p < .001$, the relationship is statistically significant. This means that stronger organisational culture is associated with lower levels of work-related bullying. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, a significant relationship exists between work-related bullying and organisational culture of selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined organisational culture and workplace bullying in selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State. Two hypotheses were formulated.

For the first hypothesis which predicted whether a significant relationship exists between Person-related Bullying and Organisational Culture. The findings of this study revealed a significant negative relationship between person-related bullying and organisational culture among selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State. The result indicates that organisations characterized by positive cultures founded on trust, respect, fairness, collaboration, and effective communication are less likely to experience person-related bullying. Conversely, organisations with weak or toxic cultures are more susceptible to behaviours such as intimidation, humiliation, social exclusion, persistent criticism, gossip, and verbal abuse. This finding underscores the critical role organisational culture plays in shaping interpersonal relationships and behavioural expectations within the workplace. The finding is consistent with Coetzee and Dyk (2017), who reported that organisational cultures promoting respect, ethical leadership, and employee support significantly reduce interpersonal conflicts and bullying behaviours. Similarly, Khalique et al. (2018) found that positive organisational values and supportive management practices foster healthy employee interactions while discouraging hostile behaviours that undermine workplace harmony. Their study emphasized that employees are less likely to engage in bullying when organisations maintain strong ethical standards and promote inclusiveness. The result also corroborates the findings of Yoo and Lee (2018), who established that supportive organisational cultures enhance employees' psychological safety and reduce workplace aggression. According to their study, employees working in organisations characterized by openness, fairness, and effective communication experience fewer incidents of interpersonal harassment. Likewise, Salin and Notelaers (2019) argued that organisational culture serves as one of the strongest predictors of workplace bullying, noting that cultures tolerating incivility and abuse create environments where bullying behaviours become normalized.

Furthermore, the present finding aligns with Judith (2018), who concluded that organisations with ineffective leadership, poor communication systems, and weak ethical climates experience higher levels of person-related bullying than organisations with employee-centred cultures. Similarly, Azizi, Jamaludin, Noordin, Saini, and Jasmi (2019) found that positive organisational cultures characterized by mutual respect, teamwork, and supportive leadership significantly reduce psychological harassment and improve employee well-being. Collectively, these studies reinforce the present finding that cultivating a healthy organisational culture is fundamental to preventing person-related bullying and promoting positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace. For the second hypothesis which projected that a significant exist between relationship between work-related bullying and organisational culture. The second finding revealed a significant negative relationship between work-related bullying and organisational culture among selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State. This implies that organisations with supportive cultures experience lower levels of work-related bullying, including unreasonable workloads, unrealistic deadlines, excessive monitoring, unfair work allocation, withholding of information, and unjustified criticism of employees' performance. In contrast, poor organisational cultures characterized by weak leadership, inadequate communication, and unfair managerial practices tend to encourage work-related bullying. This finding supports the work of Al-Gharably (2014), who found that organisational culture significantly influences the prevalence of work-related bullying, particularly where management practices are perceived as unfair or authoritarian. Similarly, Al Mualla and Hasan (2016) observed that organisations with participative leadership and employee-oriented cultures experience

fewer bullying incidents because employees perceive greater organisational justice and managerial support. The finding also agrees with Gupta, Bakhshi, and Einarsen (2017), who reported that negative organisational climates characterized by poor supervisory practices and role ambiguity contribute significantly to work-related bullying. According to their study, bullying often manifests through excessive work pressure, impossible performance expectations, and inequitable distribution of job responsibilities. Likewise, Duru, Ocaktam, Celen, and Orsal (2017) found that employees exposed to work-related bullying reported lower job satisfaction and reduced organisational commitment, largely because of unsupportive organisational environments.

Similarly, Attell, Brown, and Treiber (2017) established that organisational cultures promoting fairness, collaboration, and employee participation reduce work-related bullying by creating psychologically safe workplaces where employees feel valued and respected. Their findings suggest that supportive organisational norms discourage managerial abuse and promote equitable treatment across organisational levels. The present result further corroborates the findings of Nielsen, Emberland, Stein, and Knardahl (2017), who identified organisational culture as a significant antecedent of workplace bullying, noting that poor organisational practices and ineffective leadership increase employees' vulnerability to work-related harassment. Likewise, Yao, Zhang, Luo, and Huang (2020) concluded that organisations emphasizing ethical leadership, transparent communication, and employee involvement experience significantly lower levels of work-related bullying and higher levels of employee engagement. Finally, the findings are consistent with Buriro, Anand, Qureshi, and Shah (2021), who found that positive organisational cultures characterized by fairness, accountability, and supportive supervision significantly reduce bullying behaviours while improving employee morale and organisational performance. Their study emphasized that organisational culture not only influences employees' behaviours but also determines whether bullying is tolerated or effectively addressed through organisational policies and leadership practices. Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that organisational culture is a critical determinant of both person-related and work-related bullying. Organisations that promote ethical leadership, fairness, open communication, employee participation, and mutual respect are more likely to minimize workplace bullying, thereby enhancing employee well-being, organisational commitment, and overall organisational effectiveness. These findings provide empirical support for the view that improving organisational culture is an effective strategy for preventing workplace bullying in small-scale businesses.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between organisational culture and workplace bullying among selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State. Specifically, it investigated the relationship between person-related bullying and organisational culture, as well as the relationship between work-related bullying and organisational culture. The findings revealed that both person-related bullying and work-related bullying have significant negative relationships with organisational culture, indicating that healthier organisational cultures are associated with lower incidences of workplace bullying. The study concluded that organisational culture is a critical determinant of employees' workplace experiences and behavioural outcomes. Organisations that promote fairness, mutual respect, ethical leadership, open communication, employee participation, and supportive management practices create environments that discourage bullying behaviours. Conversely, organisations characterized by poor communication, weak

leadership, intolerance, and unfair practices are more likely to experience person-related and work-related bullying. The findings further suggest that strengthening organisational culture through clearly defined values, effective leadership, anti-bullying policies, employee education, and transparent conflict resolution mechanisms can significantly reduce workplace bullying. Therefore, fostering a positive organisational culture is essential for improving employee well-being, enhancing job satisfaction and organisational commitment, promoting harmonious working relationships, and achieving sustainable organisational performance in small-scale businesses.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on organisational culture and workplace bullying among selected small-scale businesses in Ikeja Local Government Area, Lagos State, the following recommendations are made:

- i. First, management of small-scale businesses should deliberately strengthen organisational culture by promoting values such as respect, fairness, accountability, and inclusiveness. A positive organisational culture reduces the likelihood of both person-related and work-related bullying by setting clear behavioural expectations within the workplace.
- ii. Second, organisations should establish and strictly enforce anti-bullying policies that clearly define unacceptable behaviours, reporting procedures, and disciplinary actions. Such policies will help deter potential perpetrators and provide protection for victims of workplace bullying.
- iii. Third, business owners and managers should adopt ethical and transformational leadership styles that emphasize empathy, fairness, and open communication. Effective leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organisational culture and reducing workplace aggression.
- iv. Fourth, regular employee training and awareness programmes should be implemented to educate workers on workplace rights, acceptable behaviours, and the consequences of bullying. This will enhance employees' ability to identify and report bullying incidents appropriately.

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