Beyond Definitions: An investigation of the theoretical and applied commonality between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment

Ruth Beach

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The Australian National University

Fenner School of Environment and Society

Australian National University

July 2025

© Copyright by Ruth Beach, 2025
All Rights Reserved

Statement of original work

I hereby declare that the work undertaken in this thesis has been conducted by myself except where indicated in the text. I conducted this work between May 2014 and July 2025, during which period I was a PhD student at the Australian National University. This thesis, in whole or any part of it, has not been submitted to this or any other university for a degree. This thesis has been written in accordance with relevant ANU policies. Word count is approximately 69,000 words

Ruth Beach

11 July 2025

Dedication

To my children, Solomon and Rosa, and my mother Mary. Thank you for your unfailing support and high regard for me. You lifted me up when I was low and celebrated by successes with me. Thank you.

Remember, not all avenues are open to us. But what is open to us? May we make it our own and become masters of our craft.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my principal supervisor Professor Katherine Daniell for her mentorship throughout the years and her kind encouragement when life got in the way.

Thank you to the other members of my supervision team; Associate Professor Alessandra Capezio, Doctor Sara Beavis, and Doctor Jason Mazanov for their insightful comments, encouragements and for asking the hard questions.

I also acknowledge the support provided by the Australian Department of Defence which kindly released data from the Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS) for analysis. In particular I thank Ms Samantha Atkins, Dr Nuray Buyucek, and Mrs Sharon Taylor for their friendship and support in implementing the WBS in Defence.

Acknowledgement of editorial support or artificial intelligence support

No editorial advice was sought to complete this thesis independent to my supervisory panel and the tools available in Mircrosoft Office suite of programs.

My supervisor, Professor Katherine Daniel, provided appraisal of the substance and structure of the thesis throughout my candidature, as well as final recommendations with regard to formatting and layout.

Thesis Abstract

Researchers have used construct definitions (bullying, abusive supervision, workplace aggression and many more) as the vehicle to explore and articulate interpersonal mistreatment since the mid 1990s. However, over time single construct research also contributed to literature silos, construct proliferation, conceptual confusion and under theorization. In applied contexts, a single construct focus limits decision makers' knowledge of interpersonal mistreatment in their organisation. Nonetheless, research involving multiple types of misconduct remains rare.

This thesis aims to explore the shared space in conceptualisation, methodology and experience of a range of constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Conservation of resources theory (COR) and Social Identity Theory / Self Categorisation Theory (SIT/SCT) were employed to broaden my perspective beyond definitions and their measures when designing this research.

Using a latent thematic document analysis, four seminal works on abusive supervision, incivility, workplace bullying, and workplace ostracism were examined for theoretical and methodological commonality. In the second study, cluster analysis was applied to behavioural experience data from the Workplace Behaviours Survey (n=4466), an organisational monitoring tool of the Australian Department of Defence. The self-report survey included 31 behaviours derived from published scales including workplace bullying, cyber bullying and sexual harassment.

Key findings from the document analysis were: The centrality of; misuse of power, shared operationalization processes and shared validation processes. Constructs were validated against a shared nomological net which were also indicators of stress and conformed to the predicted relationships as outlined by COR theory. An unexpected finding was that individual behavioural items could be enacted in different ways, enabling one behaviour to represent multiple constructs. These ways of enactment – here called tactics – include: direct or indirect, overt or covert, ridiculing, manipulation, exclusion, physically aggressive, engaging third parties, sexualized, and electronic ways of enacting behaviours. The findings illustrate how constructs of interpersonal mistreatment can have much in common, suggesting an underlying construct that needs theoretical attention.

The main finding of the cluster analysis is that behavioural experiences do not reflect definitional boundaries. Excluding and manipulating behaviours dominated all cluster solutions. Most clusters were differentiated by behavioural recurrence, not by types of behaviours. Where a broad array of behaviours were experienced (that is, where clusters included electronic, sexualized, aggressive, and ridiculing behaviours) these behaviour co-occurred with excluding and manipulating behaviours. Changes in impact scores (an index of six items) and PSC scores were closely associated with the number and recurrence of behaviours experienced.

The combined findings of the two studies indicate a meta construct of interpersonal mistreatment which involves exclusion, manipulation, and abuse of power. Single construct measures risk miss-attributing harmful impacts from disparate experiences to a single construct. Tactics – how behaviours are enacted – offer an alternative lens to conceptualise behaviours and to theorise the relationship between defined constructs.

These findings indicate that co-occurrence of behaviours across multiple types of interpersonal mistreatment is the norm rather than an exception. A meta-construct is apparent and new ways of conceptualizing interpersonal mistreatment are proposed.

Contents

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK I

DEDICATION III

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS V

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EDITORIAL SUPPORT OR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT VII

THESIS ABSTRACT IX

CONTENTS XI

LIST OF FIGURES XVI

LIST OF TABLES XVIII

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS 1

2 LITERATURE REVIEW 5

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERPERSONAL MISTREATMENT RESEARCH 5

3 ISSUES IN THE LITERATURE 9

3.1 CONSTRUCT PROLIFERATION 9

3.2 PLURAL TERMS FOR MULTIPLE CONSTRUCTS 11

Summary of plural terminology 13

3.3 METHOD MATTERS – OVER RELIANCE ON SELF-REPORT SURVEYS 14

Technical issues arising from over reliance on self-report survey method 14

Estimates of prevalence – global items vs behavioural items 18

Methodological monoculture – risk of reductionism through over-use of self-report survey method 19

Does survey method restrict theorisation? 21

Summary of methodological issues in the literature. 25

3.4 MODELS: CONCEPTUALISING CONSTRUCTS 25

Models that describe a research design 26

The spiral of incivility – a theoretical model that relates multiple constructs in a continuum 27

Models that include the context beyond the dyad 29

Summary of issues in the literature 31

3.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 32

What is 'a-theoretical' or 'under-theorised'? 33

Conservation of resources (COR) theory 36

Social Identity and Self Categorisation theory (SIT/SCT) 40

Theoretical proposition: Interpersonal Mistreatment has an inherent functionality 45

3.6 Summary of Theoretical Framework 45

4 RESEARCH TOPIC, AIM AND RQS 47

Knowledge gap 47

4.1 Research topic 48

4.2 Research Aim 48

Out of scope 48

4.3 Research Questions 49

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 51

5.1 Philosophical pragmatism 52

Creating knowledge is a uniquely human endeavour 52

Pragmatist research – a special type of inquiry 53

5.2 Axiology 56

Axiological statement for this research 56

Values of the research 57

5.3 Research Methodology 58

Epistemology – how knowledge is formed 60

Methodological choices, temporal orientation, data collection strategies 62

5.4 Summary of Methodology 64

6 LATENT THEMATIC DOCUMENT ANALYSIS TO INVESTIGATE THEORETICAL AND OPERATIONALISATION SIMILARITIES 65

Construct proliferation – specialization or fragmentation? 65

Study Aims and Research Questions 67

Research Question guiding the document analysis 68

6.1 Methodology 68

Statement of orientation to the data 68

Four papers and four definitions 69

Analyses 70

6.2 Findings of the latent thematic document analysis 72

6.3 Behaviours are shared and malleable 72

Tactics as indicators of escalation or normalisation 82

Relating abusive supervision, workplace bullying, workplace incivility, and workplace ostracism through behavioural tactics 83

Summary of findings related to behavioural tactics 84

6.4 Definitions with porous boundaries 85

Acknowledged overlap with other constructs 85

Power difference: formal, informal, accrued *89*
Intent - ambiguous or intentional ? *91*
Harm - Measuring impact / proof of concept *93*
Shared nomological net *95*
Physicality of interpersonal behaviour is under-theorised *99*
Reductionism *101*
Evolving constructs *103*
6.5 Discussion and Implications of Study 1 findings 103
Tactics - useful theoretical tool *103*
Implications of shared characteristics *104*
Definitions as barriers *105*
Ostracism – the way forward or a poorly conceived construct? *107*
6.6 Limitations of Study 1 108
6.7 Summary of latent thematic analysis findings 109
Behavioural tactics *109*
A shared underlying construct *110*
What might a foundational construct look like? *111*
7 CLUSTER ANALYSIS TO INVESTIGATE CO-OCCURRENCE OF INTERPERSONAL MISTREATMENT BEHAVIOURS 115
Risks of measuring a single type of interpersonal mistreatment *115*
Co-occurrence of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment is under researched *116*
Avoiding the methodological circle *119*
7.1 Study objective 119
Research questions *120*
Out of scope *120*
7.2 Methods 121
Survey Measures *122*
Participant demographics *126*
7.3 Cluster analyses design 127
7.4 Findings – Patterns of co-occurrence 132
7.5 Overview of sub-samples 133
Summary: What the sub-sample differences tell us about the experience of unacceptable behaviours *138*
7.6 Patterns of behaviour derived from cluster analyses 139
Patterns that could demonstrate defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment *139*
Frequency of single behavioural experiences *140*
Patterns in paired behaviour sub-group *141*

Patterns in the 3 and 4 behaviour sub-sample *144*
Patterns in the 5 and 6 behaviour sub-group *148*
Patterns in the 7, 8 and 9 behaviour sub-group *151*
Patterns in the 10 to 14 behaviour subgroup *154*
Patterns in the 15 to 24 behaviours subgroup *159*
Stability and validity of the cluster solutions *166*
7.7 Discussion and Implications 168
A brief summary of cluster analysis results *169*
Underlying pattern of behavioural co-occurrence *170*
Little evidence for different constructs of unacceptable behaviour *171*
Co-occurrence: time, sequencing, instigators *172*
Implications for sexual misconduct | sexual harassment measures *173*
Implications of instability in the cluster analyses *175*
Core interpersonal mistreatment behaviours *176*
7.8 Limitations of the cluster analysis 177
7.9 Study 2 Summary 179
8 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS 181
8.1 Finding: Commonality among constructs 181
Implications *186*
Way forward *190*
8.2 Finding: Tactics – unexpected and useful 191
Tactics avoid foreclosing discussions and provide theoretical space *193*
Implications: An alternate base for conceptualisation *194*
8.3 Finding: Co-occurrence and recurrence of behaviours 195
Excluding and manipulative behaviours *195*
Sexualised behaviours co-occur with non-sexualised behaviours *197*
Implications for sexual harassment and bullying *197*
Risks of single construct research *201*
8.4 Limitations 201
The exploratory nature of the research *201*
Generalisability *202*
Other limitations of the study *202*
9 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS 203
9.1 Commonality and co-occurrence indicate a base construct 203
9.2 Elements of a Base construct of interpersonal mistreatment 205
9.3 Characteristics of under-theorisation 207

9.4 TACTICS – HOW A BEHAVIOUR IS ENACTED 209
9.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 210
9.6 SUMMARY 210

10 REFERENCES 213

List of Figures

Figure 1. Inspiration for this thesis 2
Figure 2. Linear gradient of mistreatment behaviours within the spiral model (Anderson and Pearson 1999, page 460) 28
Figure 3. Cortina (2008, p 60) Integrated model of incivility as modern discrimination in organisations 30
Figure 4. Aquino and Lamertz (2004, p.1024) model of workplace victimisation 31
Figure 5. Saunders et al. 2009 research onion, adapted for this research methodology 58
Figure 6. Dewey's model of inquiry 61
Figure 7. Conceptual diagram of the relationship between tactics 82
Figure 8. Distribution of number of behaviours experienced in the sample 132
Figure 9. Proportion of female participants by behavioural frequency group 133
Figure 10. Proportion of service participants by behavioural frequency group 134
Figure 11. Mean age by behaviours experienced 135
Figure 12. Behaviours experienced by all survey respondents 135
Figure 13. Mean recurrence by behavioural frequency group 136
Figure 14. Mean impact index score by behavioural frequency group 137
Figure 15. Psychosocial Safety Climate score by behavioural frequency group 137
Figure 16. Experience of unacceptable behaviours within single behaviours sub-sample .. 141
Figure 17. Behaviour frequency in pairs sub-sample 142
Figure 18. Pairs sub-group - 4 Cluster Solution behaviour recurrence profile 143
Figure 19.Frequency of behaviours experienced - 3 & 4 behaviours subgroup 145
Figure 20. Two cluster solutions for the 3 & 4 behaviours subgroup – behaviour recurrence profile 146
Figure 21. Behaviour frequency - 5 & 5 behaviours sub-sample 148
Figure 22. Four cluster solution for the 5 & 6 behaviours subgroup – behaviour recurrence profile 149
Figure 23. Behaviour frequency - 7, 8 or 9 behaviours sub-sample 152
Figure 24. Two cluster solution for the 7, 8 or 9 behaviours sub-sample – behaviours recurrence profile 153

Figure 25. Behaviour frequency – 10 to 14 behaviours sub-sample 155
Figure 26. Three cluster solution for the 10 to 14 behaviours sub-sample 157
Figure 27. Behaviour frequency – 15 to 24 behaviours sub-sample 160
Figure 28. Five Cluster solution for behaviours experienced in the 15-24 behaviours group 162
Figure 29. Bullying and sexual harassment cited in research 2001 -2021 198

List of Tables

Table 1. Dewey's model of inquiry mapped to the research process 61
Table 2. Group and singular constructs for interpersonal mistreatment referenced in the four papers in the latent thematic document analysis 66
Table 3. Summary of tactical potentials in the behavioural scales 74
Table 4. Tactical attributes of abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and ostracism scale items 75
Table 5. Construct attributes in definitions and discussion 87
Table 6. Shared nomological net for abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and workplace ostracism 97
Table 8. Behavioural items from the WBS entered into cluster analysis 122
Table 9. PSC items adapted for Defence 124
Table 10. Global self-label options in the WBS 126
Table 7. Organisational representativeness of the behaviours data 127
Table 11. Female personnel were over-represented in the 10 – 14 behaviours group 156
Table 12. APS personnel were over-represented in the 10 – 14 behaviours groups 156
Table 13. Female personnel were over-represented in the 15 – 24 behaviours group 160
Table 14. Navy personnel were over-represented in the 15-24 behaviours groups 161
Table 15. Differences between clusters in the 15 to 24 behaviours sub-sample 5 cluster solution 162
Table 16. Stability and validation of the cluster solutions 167

1 Introduction to the thesis

Recently Fahie and Dunne (2021) wrote a transdisciplinary paper on bystanders to workplace bullying. The authors expanded beyond workplace bullying to discuss bystanders' responses to observed interpersonal actions more generally. The authors used many terms to indicate the wider milieu of interpersonal mistreatment beyond bullying, such as *workplace bullying dynamics*, *negative interpersonal interactions*, *toxic workplace behaviours*, and *negative interpersonal dynamics*. We know intuitively what they mean – a concept broader than bullying but highly related to bullying with a lot of overlapping conceptual space. This conceptual space is crowded with different ideas. These different ideas have been defined and studied in the academic literature since the early 1990s. Behavioural scales were created for many of them, which in turn have been statistically validated and replicated in multiple studies.

Over the last 30 years the main focus for researchers has been on the differentiation between constructs and the search for universal measures of those constructs that are reliable and useful in self-report methodology. This has led us to a historical schism between sexualised and non-sexualised forms of interpersonal mistreatment and given rise to construct proliferation within the interpersonal mistreatment literature. Once established, the distinctions between these ideas-that-are-related-but-different appear to be theoretically critical, and some even have their own literatures.

However, in the world of the organisational workplace, nuanced differences hold little practical value. Managers and employees need to address both bullying and ideas-that-are-related-to-bullying-but-different regardless of academic nomenclature.

Terms used as broad handles for an umbrella concept of any type of interpersonal mistreatment – like a collective noun – have also flourished in response to practical as well academic need. The phrases used by Fahie and Dunne are examples. More confusing are terms that are both a specific defined idea and a collective noun, such as when *bullying* is used both a specific type of behavioural experience, a short-hand for *bullying and harassment*, and as a catch-all for any non-sexualised interpersonal mistreatment.

PhD Origin story

I had been working in organizational research roles for 15 years when the idea for this thesis lit a fire in my mind. I was employed as a research officer in the Australian Defence Force, or Defence for short. My colleagues and I sat around a large conference table discussing a new organizational survey, the Unacceptable Behaviours Survey (WBS). It was part of the organization's response to a scandal that embroiled Defence in 2011 – where a young officer trainee recorded and distributed images of sexual acts without the consent of the young woman involved.

This new survey instrument was to be the core monitoring tool for Defence to track an array of different types of unacceptable behaviour experienced across the organisation. Ideally, we would see a reduction in unacceptable behaviour experiences as the planned cultural change program took effect. Four things struck me during that meeting:

1. We had no professional or academic experience of assessing unacceptable behaviours. Our team was experienced in organizational culture and job assessment. We needed to skill up.
2. The survey was definition based and many definitions were very long. Yet the response set was very short (yes/no). Effectively the WBS design placed a major cognitive burden on survey participants. We expected them to read, understand, and interpret the definitions while answering the survey. Further, we expected participants to apply the definition to their experiences even if that was different to their own intuitive understanding of their experiences. I wasn't sure this was a reasonable assumption or smart survey design.
3. The survey responded to an organizational need for intelligence about many different types of unacceptable behaviour across the organization. These included Workplace harassment, personal harassment, workplace bullying, discrimination, abuse of power, violent behaviour, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual discrimination, acts of indecency, sexual assault or attempted sexual assault. Other organizational survey tools tended to focus on either workplace bullying or sexual harassment but not both. The breadth of the survey was its defining innovation.
4. 4. Ironically, we did not have a measure of electronic bullying.

I thought I could do better and I also thought a PhD was an ideal way to address points 1 through 4 above. I naively thought of a PhD as a very big research project. I launched into my PhD candidature with great enthusiasm and a whole lot of assumptions, most of which I was thoroughly disabused of in the process.

Figure 1. Inspiration for this thesis

The process of navigating which term to use – the task of differentiating one construct from the array of other constructs or from interpersonal mistreatment in general – implicitly acknowledges that all constructs of negative interpersonal interaction are closely related. That in some way, they are conceptually and experientially linked.

To date there is little research into the extent or basis of construct similarity. This thesis takes another look at construct proliferation in the interpersonal mistreatment literature with a view to appreciating the common ground between constructs. It moves into the unknown space of theorising and discussing the links between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

Using Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, and Social Identity Theory & Self Categorisation Theory (SIT/SCT) as theoretical supports, and philosophical pragmatism as my methodological framework, I focus on appreciating the commonality between constructs and the co-occurrence of behaviours previously identified in the academic literature as different constructs.

To do this I conduct two studies. The first is a document analysis of four research articles that propose key interpersonal mistreatment constructs, their definitions and behavioural measures. I critically examine what is shared between these constructs. This led to identifying what was not explicitly stated - the assumptions in the theoretical foundations that the constructs are based on. It raised questions about how the investigative processes (proposed definition, representative behaviours, scale validation) may have limited our understanding of interpersonal mistreatment and consequently limited our theorisation about it. The study led to questions of whether there are other more useful ways to describe interpersonal mistreatment than the current array of construct definitions.

In the second study, I explore the relationship between sexualised, electronic, and non-sexualised interpersonal mistreatment behaviours, eschewing definitional silos. The second study is a secondary analysis of behaviour experienced drawn from a self-report survey in a large Australian government organisation. It uses data from dominant methodological paradigm in the literature, self-report behavioural measures, in a new way. The collected behavioural experience data was entered into to a series of cluster analyses to examine which behaviours grouped together.

This thesis is structured as a single document, with; introduction, aims and research questions. Then I present my methodological framework. More detailed explanations of specific methodological and analysis processes are presented within the sections that present Study 1 and Study 2. Discussion, implications of the findings and conclusions finish the thesis. Additional work that contributed to the thesis is held in the Appendices and referred to where appropriate throughout.

2 Literature review

This first section of the thesis provides the historical context for the study of interpersonal mistreatment, identifies the current debates in the literature, discusses the theoretical lens for the studies.

2.1 A brief history of interpersonal mistreatment research

Research into interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace drew initially from the literature on human aggression and violence (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997) and from Olweus' work in schools. Bullying research in educational institutions had been initiated by Dan Olweus in northern Europe during in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Olweus, 1993). Olweus' work is a touchstone for educational researchers to this day. Organisational researchers also drew on the Olweus definition of bullying in schools to inform their definitions of bullying in the workplace. In particular, the definitions stipulate the need for recurrence, and that it is difficult for targets to defend themselves.

In the 1990s researchers called attention to the importance of examining behaviours such as rude comments, gossiping, social exclusion, showing favouritism, yelling, lying, and physical assault in the workplace (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). There have been several accounts of the development of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, see for example Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper's introduction to bullying (2020b, pp. 3-9); Martinko, Harvey, Brees Mackey's account of the development of abusive supervision (2013, pp. 121-122), or Cortina and colleagues account of the development on incivility (Cortina et al., 2017, pp. 300-302). Here I will draw the focus to the development of new constructs over time.

In 1997, Einarsen and Raknes (1997) noted that research into sexual harassment in the workplace had been in progress for the prior 15 years and the extent and negative impact of sexual harassment had been well established. They argued that sexual harassment is only

one type of harassment present in the workplace and these other types of harassment are experienced by men as well as women (page 248). They noted there was a lack of research into aggression toward men in the workplace and consequently focused their attention on the prevalence and severity of non-sexualised aggression and harassment among men in the workplace. They developed a definition of workplace bullying and a behaviours measure - the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ), later with revised items becomng the Negative Acts Questionnaire -Revised (NAQ-R), which is the most often used survey tool in the bullying literature (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen et al., 2009; Einarsen et al., 2020b; Nielsen, Bjørkelo, et al., 2010; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2020; Notelaers et al., 2006; Notelaers et al., 2019).

Einarsen and Raknes' paper marked a divide between research into sexualised and non-sexualised interpersonal mistreatment which is yet to be addressed either theoretically or practically. It became as though the two subjects were unrelated to each other. While the division between sexualised and non-sexual interpersonal mistreatment is not the focus of this thesis, nonetheless the findings of this thesis inform the observed relationship between these two major categories of interpersonal mistreatment.

During Einarsen and colleagues research of *harassment* of men in 1997, the focus of their work quickly turned to bullying as a more serious form of harassment. The nomenclature became *bullying and harassment*, where bullying was identified as repeated exposure over a long period of time to the behaviours listed in the NAQ, and harassment was identified as those cases who did not meet the criteria for bullying (Einarsen et al., 2009)[1].

Harassment, as a separate construct, was investigated by other researchers. Rospenda and colleagues (Rospenda & Richman, 2004; Rospenda et al., 2000) developed the 29 item Generalized Workplace Harassment Questionnaire. In another line of enquiry, Bowling and Beehr provided a model that explained the antecedent and consequent factors to workplace harassment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006).

Even at this early stage there was acknowledgement that multiple terms can refer to what is essentially the same thing. Bowling and Beehr considered that research on workplace

[1] Einarsen cited Leymann's threshold for bullying here and is often relied upon in the literature:
"On average, 8.6 per cent of the respondents experienced ongoing bullying and non-sexual harassment at work during the last six months. Leymann (1992) who defined bullying as the exposure to one out of 45 negative acts on a weekly basis for more than six months, found that 3.5 per cent of the Swedish working population could be classified as victims of bullying at work" (Einarsen, 1999, p. of 12).

harassment can come under many different labels including bullying, interpersonal conflict, social undermining, and abuse, but “each label refers to the same overall construct”, that being “behaviour aimed at intentionally harming another employee in the workplace” (Bowling & Beehr, 2006, p. 998). Later the instigator’s intention became a point of distinction between otherwise similar constructs.

Around the same time many other constructs were identified and subsequent behavioural scale measures were developed for them. In 1995 *deviant workplace behaviours* was defined as “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms” (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, p. 556). Robinson and Bennet identified a typology of deviant workplace behaviours and typical behaviours for each of four quadrants. Deviant workplace behaviours include interpersonal mistreatment as well as acts of aggression against the organisation, such as stealing from the company or wasting resources. Bennett and Robinson later developed the organisational deviance scale and the interpersonal deviance scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Deviant workplace behaviour has also been studied as *counterproductive work behaviour*, *unethical workplace behaviour* and *misbehaviour at work* (Baharom et al., 2017). Andersson and Pearson (1999) launched the concept of *workplace incivility* by arguing for the importance of less aggressive acts in shaping organisational culture, and with other researchers, developed the concept and its behavioural measure (Blau & Andersson, 2005; Cortina et al., 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Pearson et al., 2005). Baron and Neuman developed the concept of *workplace aggression* (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Baron et al., 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1998, 2005). Tepper provided a definition of *abusive supervision* and a fifteen-item scale to measure it in 2000 (Tepper, 2000). Tepper noted that abusive supervision has been studied under other labels, such as *petty tyranny*, *supervisor aggression* and *supervisor undermining* (Tepper, 2007, pp. 263, Table 261). Ferris and colleagues (2008) defined *workplace ostracism* and operationalised it in the 13 item Workplace Ostracism Scale. Workplace ostracism may also be labelled *workplace exclusion*.

These researchers followed a common process to identify a new construct that is distinct to other constructs. First there is a definition which identifies what is unique about the construct. Then a measure is developed, which is validated through self-report survey data and inferential statistical analyses.

By the term ‘construct’ I am referring to a collection of ideas about an experience of interpersonal mistreatment. The construct label and the accompanying definition is a short-hand for a combination of elements that the researcher is describing - a boundary if you like -

that is recognisable to most people. For example, *workplace aggression* is defined as “efforts by individuals to harm others with whom they work” (Neuman & Baron, 2005). In this definition the construct of workplace aggression consists of the ideas (i) the workplace location, (ii) a dyadic interaction between an instigator and a target, (iii) emotion, in this case aggression indicated by effort and harm, and (iv) intentionality or purpose.

There is a flow of intellectual work from a perceived concept to a defined construct articulated to be unique to other constructs in a qualitative way. The new construct is then operationalised through behavioural items presented as a scale. The measurement scale can be included in self-report survey instruments. This process has led to a great many constructs of interpersonal mistreatment that are considered independently to each other in research and theorisation.

At the time of writing, we have more than 30 years of interpersonal mistreatment research in the organisational setting. Interpersonal mistreatment of all types are consistently associated with negative organisational outcomes, as well as negative effects on the mental and physical health of those subjected to it, two recent excellent reviews are Mikkelsen et al. (2020) and Hoel et al. (2020). Despite all this careful work, our theorisation about the connectedness of interpersonal mistreatment constructs in all their varied forms remains under-developed. This thesis explores this space of interconnectedness among different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

3 Issues in the literature

This section of the thesis discusses four key issues in the interpersonal mistreatment literature; construct proliferation, confusion arising from plural terms, known methodological matters, and under theorisation.

3.1 Construct proliferation

> "Proliferation of constructs complicates identifying and building on relevant literature, which is necessary in order to develop a fuller picture of what is known and not known about hostile behaviours at work" (Keashly et al., 2020, p. 58)

Construct proliferation has been identified as problematic in the interpersonal mistreatment literature since the early 2000s (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bies & Tripp, 2005; Neuman & Baron, 2005). Researchers identify constructs that could be equivalent to the focus of their study (for example Bies & Tripp, 2005; Glomb & Liao, 2003, p. 488; Tepper, 2007) but have been unable to identify a clear redundancy or a combination solution that is generally accepted. For example, Tepper (2007) identified multiple constructs that were equivalent to *abusive supervision*: *petty tyranny*, *supervisor aggression*, and *supervisor undermining*. Tepper identified that the different terminology and corresponding measures overlap to varying degrees and he described the abusive supervision literature as 'fragmented and poorly integrated' (2007, p. 262). Nonetheless he argued for the validity and distinction of the construct of *abusive supervision* to other constructs. In another example, Bies and Tripp (2005) identified five related constructs to *revenge*: *retaliation*, *deviant workplace behaviours*, *workplace aggression*, and *violence in the workplace*. They argued that the independence of these constructs is questionable and call for the use of an umbrella construct – *workplace aggression* – to promote a unified theory of these behaviours in the workplace. However, and umbrella construct has not been theorised or widely adopted.

In Hershcovis' seminal work (2011, p. 499), she noted nine different but equivalent constructs. She acknowledged that while each construct had key distinguishing features,

there was also “considerable definitional, conceptual, and measurement overlap”. She further examined five constructs; *social undermining*, *incivility*, *bullying*, *abusive supervision*, and *interpersonal conflict* for evidence of similarities and differences and concluded that the way these constructs are differentiated are not theoretically useful, that is they ‘do not add appreciably to our knowledge of workplace aggression’ (2011, p. 499). Hershcovis identified three challenges to the workplace aggression literature, a need to: test assumptions within constructs, to develop measurement methods that address these assumptions, and to expand the theorisation about aggressors. In 2013, Herschovis and colleagues further argued for the integration of perpetrator and target literatures for workplace aggression (Hershcovis & Reich, 2013). They critiqued the over reliance on cross-sectional survey design, and noted that predictors and outcomes in the two literatures overlapped so that the designation of instigator and target was fluid. They identified that there needed to be greater focus on the inter-personal or relational aspect of workplace aggression.

Other authors have proffered a way forward. In 2009, Aquino and Thau argued for the radical idea that ‘one measure may be as good as any other for examining the consequences of work-place victimization’ (Aquino & Thau, 2009, p. 732), and more recently Vranjes and Lyubykh (2021) noted the need to understand the uniqueness and similarities of different mistreatment constructs and proposed an agenda for research. In contrast, Tepper and Henle argued for maintaining the current array of constructs despite their apparent overlaps and similarities (Tepper & Henle, 2011). However, it has been noted that, amongst all these different conversations, the differences between constructs have not been established empirically (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018, p. 76).

To date it appears that Tepper and Henle’s (2011) preference for specificity prevailed in the intervening years, at least in the academic literature. Little had changed between 2011 and 2020 when Keashly, Tye-Williams and Jagatic reviewed the workplace bullying concept. They listed 17 different terms and definitions for *hostile behaviours at work* (their collective term), and once again observed that construct proliferation was a barrier to developing a fuller picture of hostile behaviours at work (Keashly et al., 2020). Researchers have by and large been concerned with highlighting the differences between proposed constructs and have been resistant to working with their similarities. This has led to a situation of construct proliferation that maintains focus on individual constructs and hinders theorising about workplace interpersonal mistreatment more generally.

3.2 Plural terms for multiple constructs

Construct proliferation raises the very practical issue of how to refer to multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. That we need global or umbrella terms is evident by the way academics, law makers, and organisations struggle with identifying a group noun. This situation has theoretical implications about the existence of an underlying construct.

Improvised plural terms

Academics, government bodies and organisations all struggle with referring to interpersonal mistreatment as a general concept. Researchers tend to choose an umbrella term when delineating their construct of interest against other constructs. Neuman and Baron proposed the term *workplace aggression* as an aggregate category when discussing multiple constructs (Neuman & Baron, 2005). Barling, Dupré and Kelloway used the term *workplace aggression* both as a construct and a generalised category of related constructs that include *emotional abuse, workplace incivility, workplace violence, antisocial work behaviour, psychological abuse, bullying*, and *workplace harassment* (Barling et al., 2009, p. 672). Hershcovis (2011) also used *workplace aggression* as a plural term. Van De Griend and Messias used *workplace violence* to refer to *interpersonal aggression, sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination,* and *oppression in the workplace* (Van De Griend & Messias, 2014, p. 33) as did Kim (2024). Neall and Tucky utilised *workplace harassment* as an umbrella term for *workplace bullying, incivility, victimization, social undermining*, and *abusive supervision* (Neall & Tuckey, 2014, p. 226). Many authors use *workplace bullying* as an aggregate category that includes *harassment* (Branch et al., 2013; Einarsen et al., 2009) which indicates that distinctions between the two constructs *bullying* and *harassment* has limited applied or theoretical value. Lim and Cortina proposed that *bullying, incivility*, and *sexual harassment* all fall within a broader construct of *interpersonal mistreatment* (Lim & Cortina, 2005, p. 283). Interpersonal mistreatment is a term used by other researchers which purposively includes subtle forms of aggression (Cortina, 2008; Love, 2012; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015).

In applied settings there is a similar need to refer to multiple types of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. What is the plural term for the array of interpersonal mistreatment constructs that can occur in an organisation? For practical reasons the term must span a wider array of interpersonal mistreatment that academics typically group together. In the organisational setting this must include discrimination, harassment, abuse of power, technology facilitated abuse and sexualised forms of interpersonal mistreatment. In

practice, legislators, organisational practitioners, and communicators will nominate a term to refer to a broad collection of the types of interpersonal mistreatment they are addressing, often reiterating the sexualised – non-sexualised distinction.

Safe Work Australia uses the term harmful behaviours to include violence and aggression, bullying, harassment (which includes sexual harassment or gender-based harassment), and conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions (Australia, 2022, Appendix B). Similarly to some academics listed above, the Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman uses workplace bullying as an aggregate category that includes harassment, aggressive behaviours, ridicule, coercion, ostracism, and unreasonable work demands (Ombudsman, 2014). The Australian Department of Defence uses the term unacceptable behaviour to account for all interpersonal mistreatment behaviours, including sexual harassment and sexual offences (Defence, 2023, pp. pages 63-66). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention defines violence and harassment as

> "… a range of unacceptable behaviours, practices or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm" (Organization, 2020, p. 8).

Violence and harassment is the ILO collective term for 'the extensive anthology' of labels for harmful work-based behaviours. The World Health Organisation uses the term *violence and harassment at work* for the same purpose (Organisation & Organization, 2022, page 4, 10, 13).

Theoretical implication – an underlying shared construct exists

At this point, we appear to be sleepwalking toward the proliferation of generalised terms for interpersonal mistreatment that are generated by academic and non-academic sources. These terms are firmly rooted in pragmatic concerns rather than a cohesive idea about what is shared between constructs, nor do they proffer a theoretical basis for how different constructs relate to each other. One implication of the extensive anthology is that there is an underlying shared idea or set of ideas to all constructs of *interpersonal mistreatment*, that all constructs can be conceptualised together as a whole idea. The question that is yet to be answered by academics is 'What are the key elements that all the constructs of *interpersonal mistreatment* hold in common?'

Collective terms used in this thesis – interpersonal mistreatment & unacceptable behaviour

Following Lim and Cortina (2005) I employ the term *interpersonal mistreatment* (IM) as an aggregate term when referring to academic work. This term will no longer be italicised in the thesis. In the context of this thesis, interpersonal mistreatment encompasses behaviours that span the sexualised/non-sexualised boundary. It includes both subtle and overtly aggressive acts as well as electronic acts. In this way my use of *interpersonal mistreatment* is broader than Lim and Cortina's conceptualisation.

Further, in this thesis I use the term *unacceptable behaviour* when referring to my second study. The second study (see Section 5 How do interpersonal mistreatment behaviours co-occur?) is a secondary data analysis of organisation survey data administered to personnel in the Australian Department of Defence. The organisation uses the term *unacceptable behaviour* to describe all unacceptable interpersonal behaviours, including *bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, electronic bullying*, and *technology facilitated abuse*. This application of the term *unacceptable behaviour* reflects the definition and nomenclature used by the organisation and is the definition under which the behavioural data was collected.

By using these two different terms I am able to (i) make a clear distinction between academic work and the findings from the secondary data analysis, (ii) maintain fidelity with the policies and definitional constructs of the organisational data, and (iii) easily distinguish the general group term from those of specific constructs, thus avoiding some confusion.

Summary of plural terminology

The wide use of aggregate terms to discuss interpersonal mistreatment in a collective way demonstrates general recognition that there is some form of theoretical and practical commonality between different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. However, the theoretical and empirical basis of that commonality remains largely unexplored. While the term interpersonal mistreatment is used as the collective term in this thesis, I acknowledge that this theoretical space is in its infancy. At some point this term or another will emerge as the agreed collective term for multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

3.3 Method matters – over reliance on self-report surveys

The great majority of studies in the interpersonal mistreatment literature have relied on cross-sectional self-report survey methodology (Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Nielsen, Bjørkelo, et al., 2010; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Samnani, 2013) and most often drawn from the targets' perspective (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018, p. 73). This has been a source of concern for some time, often expressed as concern about technical bias or technical inaccuracies. There have been regular calls to expand the methodologies used to study interpersonal mistreatment including: to focus on the perpetrator perspective (Einarsen et al., 2020b, p. 11), increased psychometric assessment of scales and across cultures (Tepper, 2007, p. 284) adopting longitudinal and experimental designs or diary studies (Neall & Tuckey, 2014), and to expand into diary studies and qualitative approaches (Keashly et al., 2020, p. 84). This list demonstrates that most discussion in the literature about the limitations of self-report survey methodology is focused on technical aspects of measurement and on broadening the base of current conceptualisations. Nonetheless research in the emerging fields of cyber bullying (also termed cyber harassment, cyber victimisation or technology facilitated abuse) and sexualised cyber bullying and is similarly committed to self-report survey methodology and formative scales (for example Betancourt, 2016; Choi & Park, 2019; Ehman & Gross, 2019; Escartín et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2014). This indicates that the primacy of this methodology in the interpersonal mistreatment literature will remain for some time to come.

Here, I will present some of the issues identified by previous authors; technical critiques raised about the operationalisation of construct definitions; estimates of prevalence; and the risks of a methodological mono-culture.

Technical issues arising from over reliance on self-report survey method

Every research method has its limitations. The over-reliance on one type of method over another leaves the accumulated body of literature vulnerable to the limitations of the method. Technical matters in the bullying literature were scrutinised by Notelaers and Van der Heijden (2021) and they concluded that "construct validity in this scholarly field is largely threatened in quantitative studies". They critiqued sampling strategies, the use of un-

anchored global items, and ordinal response sets. These technical limitations are equally relevant to other constructs measured by behavioural item scales. Hershcovis (2011) highlighted another set of limitations: the limitation of behavioural scales to operationalise the full definitions of different interpersonal mistreatment constructs; the propensity of cross-sectional methodologies to hypothesise relationships between independent and dependent variables - leading to assumptions about cause & effect; and the nature of behavioural scales to be normative rather than reflective.

Limitations of behavioural scales

At face value the idea of a behavioural measure is fairly straight forward. It is intended to be more objective than a single item question such as "Have you experienced bullying?".[2] Such global items call for an assessment of the participants' experiences, which encompasses the behaviours experienced, their thoughts and feelings about the experiences and the participants' assessment of whether this amounts to bullying or not. Behavioural item scales reduce the level of participant evaluation included in the assessment of interpersonal mistreatment, in this case bullying.

The behavioural items included in the measurement scales are intended to be exemplars of the different elements of the construct. For example, experiences of being lied to, ignored, yelled at, and physical intimidation are amalgamated to assess the experience of abusive supervision in the Abusive Supervision Scale. Behavioural items have high face validity for survey participants. They are easier to understand and apply to one's own experience than a construct definition. The resulting scale data lends itself to more robust statistical analyses than single item global self assessments.

The advantages notwithstanding, the operationalisation of construct definitions through the development of behavioural scales has been critiqued for methodological limitations (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Hershcovis, 2011; Hershcovis et al., 2020; Hershcovis & Reich, 2013; Tepper & Henle, 2011)[3]. The problems identified with behavioural scales include;

[2] Global measures (e.g., single items measures such "Have you experienced bullying?") have been criticised for being overly subjective. See below section for discussion.

[3] Others have reviewed the methodologies commonly used in research of interpersonal mistreatment from a positivist point of view which tends to favour behavioural item scales as more objective than global items. In part this is because they deliver scale level quantitative data and remove the participants' evaluation of their experiences (Neall, & Tuckey, 2014; Nielsen, Bjørkelo, Notelaers, & Einarsen, 2010; Nielsen, Noetlaers & Einarsen, 2020).

(i) They frequently share very similar behavioural items across different constructs (Hershcovis, 2011, p. 509).

(ii) They ignore the source and context of the behaviour which can alter the nature and level of impact on the target.

(iii) The behavioural scales are formative rather than reflective (Hershcovis et al., 2020; Hershcovis & Reich, 2013), meaning that the items are an integral part of the construct, not independent to it. In effect they are the construct, rather than indicators of the construct.[4]

(iv) Additionally, some behaviours can be considered mild while other behaviours can be severe even with a single experience of it. At the item level, behaviour is treated equally in scoring and statistical analysis regardless of the differences in the nature or severity of the behaviours. For example, not being greeted and being verbally abused are counted as equal experiences. These behavioural items are bundled together and treated as equivalent units of measure so that dissimilar behaviours are treated equally when calculating the scale score.[5]

(v) The level of exposure to interpersonal mistreatment is equated with the frequency count of behavioural experiences. This means that behavioural measures are weighted toward less severe and more frequently occurring interpersonal mistreatment behaviours.

In summary, ignoring non-behavioural aspects of interpersonal mistreatment, using similar behaviours to identify different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, and treating all items as the same measurement unit despite qualitative differences and differences in intensity, all speak to assumptions in our methodology that embed unknown biases in our research.

[4] In contrast, reflective measures are comprised of uni-dimensional items. One example of a reflective measure in the interpersonal mistreatment literature is the Workplace Ostracism Scale, which reflects a single underlying concept of passive exclusion.

[5] Further and at the level of the response set, frequency is measured using an ordinal response set, such as never, now and then, sometimes, often, and very often. When scoring the combined behavioural experiences, most behavioural scales are calculated as the sum of responses to each item. The data from the ordinal response set is transformed into a series of sequential numbers (such as 1 to 5), so that the ordinal nature of the data is disguised. At the data analysis level, with the exception of studies that use non-parametric statistical tests, scoring and data analysis ignore the ordinal nature of the data.

Non-behavioural aspects omitted from measurement scales

In her 2011 paper, Hershcovis compared the operationalisation of five constructs; abusive supervision, bullying, incivility, social undermining, and interpersonal conflict. She concluded that distinctive features of each definition were not measured in the behavioural scales.

> "While each of these constructs differentiates itself theoretically, these differences are assumptions of the definition and conceptualization. Researchers have not tended to measure the factors (i.e., persistence, power, intent, intensity) that make these constructs different" Hershcovis, 2011 #326@502}.

In agreement with Hershcovis, Tepper and Henle (2011) argue that behavioural scales used to measure interpersonal mistreatment frequently omit one or more salient characteristics of the definition being measured. For example, Tepper and Henle point out that the definition of bullying includes the idea that the target has difficulty in defending him or herself against the bullying behaviours, yet bullying measures do not capture the targets' feelings of coping or distress about the mistreatment they experienced (Tepper & Henle, 2011, p. 91). This leads to bullying being identified by a reduced set of factors, namely behavioural experiences, rather than by the full definition of bullying.

Current measures are context blind. Hershcovis and colleagues went on to critique the focus of research on the instigator-target dyad which fails to account for the effect of social and situational context on the experience workplace interpersonal mistreatment (Hershcovis et al., 2020; Hershcovis & Reich, 2013). Drawing on the work of Lamertz and Aquino, they identified that different behaviours will have very different meanings for the targets depending on context, for example being ignored by one's supervisor is more damaging than being ignored by a colleague.

Cross-sectional studies can lead to confusion about correlates being antecedent or consequent

This assessment of self-report survey methodology is not complete without noting the cumulative effect of cross-sectional studies on the developing theoretical linkages between ideas. As noted earlier, The great majority of studies in the interpersonal mistreatment literature have relied on cross-sectional self-report survey methodology (Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Nielsen, Bjørkelo, et al., 2010; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Samnani, 2013) and most often drawn from the targets' perspective (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018, p. 73). Perhaps most importantly, cross-sectional designs do not allow for causal inferences between variables to

be tested (Danziger, 1985; Law, 2009), and this can lead to confusion about the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

> "This reliance on one-time point studies seems to have created confusion about whether key correlates of bullying are predictors, consequences, or both (see also Hershcovis & Reich, 2013)" (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018, p. 77).

This is a developing area in the literatures. A recent qualitative study of Chinese adolescents (He et al., 2024) developed the role of the bully-victim. The bully-victim describes how a single actor can cycle through both bully and target role when enmeshed in a toxic situation (Vranjes et al., 2023) and has a history with cyclic models of interpersonal mistreatment like the spiral of incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), or the General framework of workplace bullying (Branch et al., 2021) .

In summary, common methodological assumptions in the use of self-report measures are that: the interpersonal mistreatment construct can be meaningfully represented by a set of indicative behavioural items (that is, the items faithfully reflect what is unique about the construct); shared behavioural items do not impact the scale ability to measure a construct; these behaviours can be quantified meaningfully without context; and that the impact of one behaviour is equivalent to another.

Estimates of prevalence – global items vs behavioural items

Concern over the possible mismatch between workplace interpersonal mistreatment identified via a behavioural measure and mistreatment identified through a global measure has been evident in the literatures since the early 2000s.

> "A study comprising 1095 Australian adults found that there was limited overlap between lay definitions and scientific definitions of bullying as laypersons definitions included characteristics that were not a part of the scientific definitions, and vice versa" (Saunders, Huynh, & Goodman-Delahunty, 2007 in Yamada et al., 2018, p. 74).

Nielsen and colleagues have investigated the relative merits of different measures of *bullying*. These included a self-report single global item (called the *self-labelling method* because the survey participants identified their experiences as 'bullying'), a global item with definition, and the NAQ and NAQ-R behavioural scales (the *behavioural experience method* because it measures experiences of listed behaviours) (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2011). In their meta-analysis of 86 bullying studies Nielsen et

al. (2009) estimated that 14.6% of employees on a global basis are exposed to some level of workplace bullying. Prevalence estimates varied depending on the type of measure used: a single item global measure, with provided definition of bullying, yielded a prevalence estimate of 10.6%, behavioural measures found an average prevalence of bullying to be 14.7%, and the highest prevalence of bullying was found by single global measures without a definition, producing an average estimate of 19.8% (Nielsen, Matthiesen, et al., 2010).

Nielsen considers the behavioural experience method as more objective than a single global item because the data gathered is without reference to the survey participants' thoughts on whether they were bullied or not. The researcher determines if bullying occurred based on the combined score of all the behavioural items. However, Nielsen et al. concede that a single global item indicates how the participant thinks and feels about their experiences as bullied or not, which in turn indicates how a person responds to the experiences. Therefore, the more subjective measure also has merit. A third party observation – while arguably more 'objective' than self-report measures, or self-report behavioural scales - will also miss the many less observable reiterations of bullying. They concluded that the best course of action is to include both self-report and behavioural measures of bullying as "the methods should be regarded as equally useful since both approaches seem to provide valid but complementary information on the phenomenon" (Nielsen et al., 2020, p. 257).

While the debate about global vs behavioural scales appears to have been settled for an inclusive approach, future work is needed to articulate *how* the two measures complement each other. It is certainly a step towards diversification of valid perspective in measures of interpersonal mistreatment.

Methodological monoculture – risk of reductionism through over-use of self-report survey method

> "… surveys are also ways of forming opinions and are not a purely neutral tool of observation. … there is a performative effect in the definition and use of categories and subjects to be asked about" (Joye et al., 2016, p. 15).

Less often discussed in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures is the inherently limiting nature of self-report survey methodology itself. In most papers there is implied preference

given to positivist research methods as being more objective that other types of data.[6] This is most often indicated by a lack of critique of self-report survey methodology, even when researchers acknowledge that more methodological diversity or improved design elements are needed (see for example Einarsen et al., 2020a; Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Nielsen, Bjørkelo, et al., 2010; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018; Notelaers et al., 2019; Notelaers & Van der Heijden, 2021).

Self-report surveys are designed to focus an enquiry into a series of items that can be answered categorically. They quantify thoughts, experiences, and attitudes that may be inherently unlimited, changeable and unquantifiable. In this way survey design and scale construction take concepts that are complex and reduce them to items that can be included in a survey. Ideally, each item represents a single essential aspect of a concept.
Of necessity, survey designers identify which information is essential to achieve their analysis goals and simultaneously limit all other information.

No matter how well intended, or how well constructed, survey design reduces conceptual ideas to simple items coupled with set response categories which are designed to elicit numeric data for statistical analyses. This carries risks to rigour and validity of research findings and needs to be balanced with critical reflection of the survey process as a form of data collection and embedded assumptions within the methodology.

Durand argues that survey design has developed its own pattern of language.

> "... instead of 'What do you think of your government?', they ask 'Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with your government?'. This process is essential in order to compare answers to survey questions with one another. … Standardized formats appear to make all questions simple and easy to ask, but this apparent clarity tends to oversimplify issues" (Durand, 2016, p. 4).

While Durand is writing about public opinion surveys, the principles are the same in academic research. Survey design moulds the nature of the information into a series of assumptions which are built into each item, simultaneously excluding information that falls beyond the items themselves. Therefore, a key pitfall of over-reliance on self-report survey

[6] This is distinct to common method bias which is a specific technical hazard of self-report survey method where all data (dependent, independent, mediating and moderating variables) are measured from the same source – i.e. self reported. This potentially results in the artificial inflation of relationships (Jordan & Troth, 2020).

methodology is the assumption that widely different experiences and understandings "can be expressed in standardized ways and that these expressions do not alter meanings" (Durand, 2016, p. 4).

Does survey method restrict theorisation?

Here I consider how over-reliance on self-report survey methodology and behavioural scales have contributed to under-theorisation in the interpersonal mistreatment literature. I draw on the critique that Law (2009) brings to the social sciences and Latour and Woolgar (1979) brought to the physical sciences in an effort to understand how the limitations of the dominant self-report survey method shape our conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment.

Problem of 'seeing like a survey'

Law (2009) explores the way social science methods function to generate representations of reality, but also to generate the reality they depict. This line of thought is a direct challenge to the valued objectivity of positivist methods which (usually tacitly) assumes that researchers do not influence the subjects of their enquiry. In fact, the aim of behavioural scales of interpersonal mistreatment is to maximise the objectivity of collected data – that is, data not biased by a survey participant's interpretation of events.

Law proposed that research methods are performative. That is, they help to enact the world that they describe, and that the performative character of survey methodology is predominantly implicit. He used as an example the Eurobarometer, which is a set of surveys of European public opinion used to track issues of continuing concern. Law unpacked five layers of meaning that the survey and the use of the survey findings enacted or 'performed'. He describes how our understanding of a nation, a consumer, the public, and the appropriate expression of our political choices as consumers are all identified, enacted and reiterated in the survey methodology. Most importantly, Law described this performativity as 'mundane' and 'bog-standard', of the 'more or less invisible assumptions being enacted' (Law, 2009, p. 247):

> ".. that statistics is a set of methods practices that uninterestingly and therefore more or less invisibly enacts a very particular version of the collective. In particular, it performs it as a countable [phenomena]" (Law, 2009, p. 247).

Law characterises the survey method as ordinary, ubiquitous and unquestioned. Furthermore, it is this very ordinariness that indicates the profound way survey thinking has become normalised in human reality making. Considering the self-report survey method and the behavioural scales used in interpersonal research, there are three key implications of Law's arguments.

(i) Firstly, we must acknowledge that the survey method is used primarily to test a version of reality as true or untrue through the use of data collected to test hypotheses. In that sense, survey methodology is rarely used generatively in a theoretical sense. Survey methodology primarily re-iterates the assumptions and design choices that it embodies. It cannot challenge them. It cannot divulge something the researcher hadn't thought of a priori to data collection.

(ii) As discussed above, survey methodology is an abstraction of the phenomena under study – a very specific abstraction. It makes uncountable things countable. We understand the complex phenomenon of interpersonal mistreatment through the lens of survey items and through the lens of analysis practices and norms.

(iii) The process of abstraction, categorisation, quantification, and analysis embeds an ideal of 'objectivity' and encourages us to credit survey data with the idea of accuracy and precision about the world.

The net result is that a relatively limited version of the interpersonal mistreatment constructs comes to stand as 'real'. Over time, we actually have a theoretical devolvement from espoused definitions to a construct label that refers to a specific set of behaviours. This devolvement is entrenched through a process of reification, as accounted by Latour and Woolgar.

Latour and Woolgar – the Reification of methodological tools

Latour and Woolgar conducted an anthropological study of the life of science laboratory, using participant observation and document analysis over two years (Latour & Woolgar, 1979). It is a seminal work about the social construction of knowledge. Latour and Woolgar wanted to encounter those aspects of scientific activity which are readily taken for granted in a new way (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 29).[7] Specifically, they wanted to look beyond scientists' statements of their own work in published papers and scientific reports, which obfuscate the processes and programs behind the reported 'facts' or discoveries (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 28). They used a grounded theory approach to ask 'How is it that the

[7] I took their work as instructive on how I should engage with my disquiet about the survey methodologies used to research interpersonal mistreatment in organisations.

realities of scientific practice become transformed into statements about how science has been done' (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 29).

According to Latour and Woolgar, scientists distrust the idea of social or emotional influences on the scientific method. They (scientists and researchers who adopt the positivist approach to knowledge generation) assume that the presence of social factors makes the science unobjective, and consequently null and void. For positivists, the invocation of social circumstances undermines the scientific observation – it detracts from the importance and rigour of the study.

Interpersonal mistreatment researchers show similar characteristics. They often present their own thinking as intellectual, supported by the output of statistical analysis of data drawn from behavioural scales. Survey participants are assumed to follow the researchers' conceptualisations embedded in the survey design. They are assumed to adopt the definitions, have detailed recall of their experiences over the recall period of the survey, and to codify their experiences using the items and response options provided. If there is a discrepancy between researcher and the respondent, the respondents are assumed to be in error.

Latour and Woolgar conceptualised the various scientific apparatus as 'reified theory' (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 66) or as 'material theories and practices' (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 68). The work of operating these apparatus and conducting the practices were described as 'craft work' (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, p. 69).

A corollary in interpersonal mistreatment research is the definition and the construction of the behavioural scale. The interpersonal mistreatment construct definition becomes an artefact, an object that is increasingly adopted without further inquiry. The construct definition and measurement tool are the output of the craft work – survey design – that then also becomes a scientific object. The alignment of the definition and the measurement tool is rarely critiqued. More often the definition and measurement tool are adopted by other researchers as a unit. In this manner researchers forget the limitations of the methodology and even perhaps become unconscious of the limitations of the survey design process.

By imposing a survey framework on the chaos of lived experience many contributing factors are deemed out of frame. This out-of-frameness is not explored, which is fair enough. What is theoretically stunting is the assumption that it doesn't need to be explored. Or even that

what is out of frame doesn't exist. That somehow the construct definition, coupled with a measurement scale has accounted for the full theoretical space of the construct.

In summary, Latour and Woolgar's identification of reified material theories and practices describe the process by which self-report survey method may inhibit new thinking about the relationship between individual constructs and the theorisation of interpersonal mistreatment generally. There is some support for this observation in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures.

Concern about insular thinking in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures

Here I offer some examples of authors who are concerned with re-conceptualising different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

For example, D'Cruz, Noronha and Lutgen-Sandvik (2018) call for the field of bullying research to loosen its focus on behaviours and numbers and to embrace diverse methodologies such as diary studies, longitudinal studies, and qualitative studies. Alternately, Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Magley and Nelson identified literature silos as sources of insularity and called on incivility researchers to reach out and engage with ideas from 'disparate literatures, disciplines, and mistreatment domains' (Cortina et al., 2017, p. 309). It is a mark of the strength of these silos that different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment can be conceived of as disparate literatures. In 2013 Samnani noted that the workplace bullying literature is dominated by the functionalist perspective, which is a positivist methodological framework. He then illustrated how to view workplace bullying literature through three alternative paradigmatic lenses (2013, p. 26), interpretivism, critical management theory, and postmodernism. The interpretivist approach provides a rich description of bullying focused on understanding the meanings of both targets and perpetrators of bullying behaviours. An interpretivist approach would integrate multiple perspectives, explicitly providing research participants with a voice, which positivist approaches do not do. A critical management theory perspective proposes that dehumanized and impersonal workplace relations stimulate bullying behaviours. Alternatively, critical management theory could build the perspective of workplace bullying as a reflection of power relations (such as gender and race) in wider society" (Samnani, 2013, p. 34). The postmodernist perspective would focus on conceptualising workplace bullying as an exercise in control, so would emphasise the use of power, control, and surveillance.

These authors illustrate how alternate theoretical orientations could be used to reframe a construct of interpersonal mistreatment, how it can be perceived, understood, and researched. Yet these alternate orientations still operate within the individual constructs of their focus. They do not question, for example, if bullying or incivility exist as independent constructs. Successive researchers adopt the construct definitions and measurement tools that were established and widely accepted as the starting point for their research. Nielsen and Einarsen neatly summed up the issue:

> "Without an underpinning theory, additional studies using designs that are more advanced will most likely continue the tendency towards a-theoretical empirical studies where post-hoc explanations will be favored at the expense of a priori theory" (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018, p. 77).

Summary of methodological issues in the literature.

It is likely that the widespread use of defined constructs and their concomitant behavioural scales have resulting in a contraction in the scope of the constructs so that they are effectively reduced to the series of items used to measure it. A further problem is that this appears to have contributed to literature silos, such that the overlapping theoretical areas between constructs is not explored. Repeated calls to expand the variety of methods used in interpersonal mistreatment research have thus far yielded little result. Self-report survey methods utilising behavioural scales remain the dominant research process used in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures.

Part of the resistance to change can be explained by the embeddedness of behavioural scales and the embeddedness of considering constructs individually in the general approach and thinking of the literature the process of reification identified by Latour and Woolgar. Resistance to change is also in part due to the sheer accessibility of construct definitions and behavioural measurement scales designed for self-report survey methodology. The thinking has been done, and new researchers only need to consider new applications of the tools.

3.4 Models: Conceptualising constructs

> "A theory is a set of analytical principles or statements designed to structure our observations, understanding and explanations of the world. Theories are

> therefore an important basis and guide in research as they provide suggestions for reasonable questions and explanations for how and why specific relationships may lead to specific events. However, because the scientific study of workplace bullying seems to have arisen from a need to address an important social problem rather than as the result of purely academic and theoretical interest, theories guiding workplace bullying research are therefore relatively few and far between (Høgh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2011; Zapf & Einarsen, 2005)" (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018, p. 77).[8]

In this section I examine models of interpersonal mistreatment presented in the literature. I discuss how they position different singular constructs, and these constructs are envisaged in relationship to other constructs. These models can describe a research design, relate multiple constructs to each other, or present a conceptual space.

Models that describe a research design

The most frequent approach to researching interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace is to focus on one construct and accept that construct as generally unproblematic. By 'generally unproblematic' I mean the construct is treated as being theoretically distinct to other constructs, and objectively and reliably measured through the proposed measurement scale. From this starting point, researchers investigate the antecedent and consequent factors (variables) and the hypothesised relationship between them. Some examples of this work are Nielsen and Einarsen's (2012) model of the effects of bullying, Bowling and Beehr's model of reciprocity and attribution processes in workplace harassment (Bowling and Beehr 2006, page 999); the multilevel model of interpersonal mistreatment (Cunningham et al., 2014) which steps out micro, meso and macro level antecedents and outcomes to interpersonal mistreatment; and Restubog, Scott, and Zagenczyk contextual factors of abusive supervision (Restubog et al., 2011, page 715). The constructs bullying, workplace harassment, and abusive supervision are central to the models, but the constructs themselves are presented as unitary and not related to other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

These models illustrate how different chosen variables in a research design relate to a single construct of interpersonal mistreatment. They test and extend our knowledge of those

[8] This observation is shared by many, though it is curious that after 30 years in bullying research Nielsen and Einarsen have not identified a theoretical basis to inform their work. Perhaps it is the best indication of how stuck the literature is with construct definitions *as* ersatz theory embedded in a methodological mono-culture.

constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. They do not investigate the relationship between multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

The spiral of incivility – a theoretical model that relates multiple constructs in a continuum

Models that relate multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment propose links between them and a process for why a situation might transform from say, incivility to bullying. The most common relational model is a linear one, moving from mild instances of interpersonal mistreatment through to very impactful interpersonal mistreatment. Examples are the conflict escalation model of Glasl (1994) (in Zapf & Gross, 2001, p. 501) and Andersson and Pearson's Conceptual Framework for the Spiralling Effect of Incivility in the Workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Here I review one model, Andersson and Pearson's model of incivility (1999), noting that other models that relate constructs have been proposed (Bennett et al., 2005; Hershcovis, 2011; Keashly & Harvey, 2005; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Pearson et al., 2005).

Andersson and Pearson's model of incivility (1999) visually unpacks and extends their definition of incivility (Figure 2). For example, the definition of incivility does not require recurrence, that is, a single act can be uncivil without reference to a preceding or subsequent experience. However, through recurrence, reciprocation, retaliation and feedback loops, such individual experiences are related to each other and can lead to an escalation of incivility to 'coercive behaviour' which is a term referring to other acts of interpersonal mistreatment without identifying a specific construct.

By relating individual acts to each other and using the idea of a spiral to indicate intensification, Anderson and Pearson demonstrate mechanisms by which mutual incivility can escalate into other aggressive forms of mistreatment. The progression from thoughtless acts, through rude remarks, maligning insults, coercive action, revenge, to a threat of physical attack, is presented as a linear gradient of mistreatment behaviours within the model. The mechanism of progressing along this gradient is perceived insult and a desire for revenge.

The 'spiral' concept effectively conveys how acts of incivility can intensify and/or transform into other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. The spiral model describes how multiple individual actions can accumulate to a tipping point where the target takes retaliatory action.

It describes a process for a situation to deteriorate. Andersson and Pearson also hypothesise bystander effects and de-escalation opportunities in the model. This proved to be prescient as bystanders' response to interpersonal mistreatment and intervention is now a focus area of research.

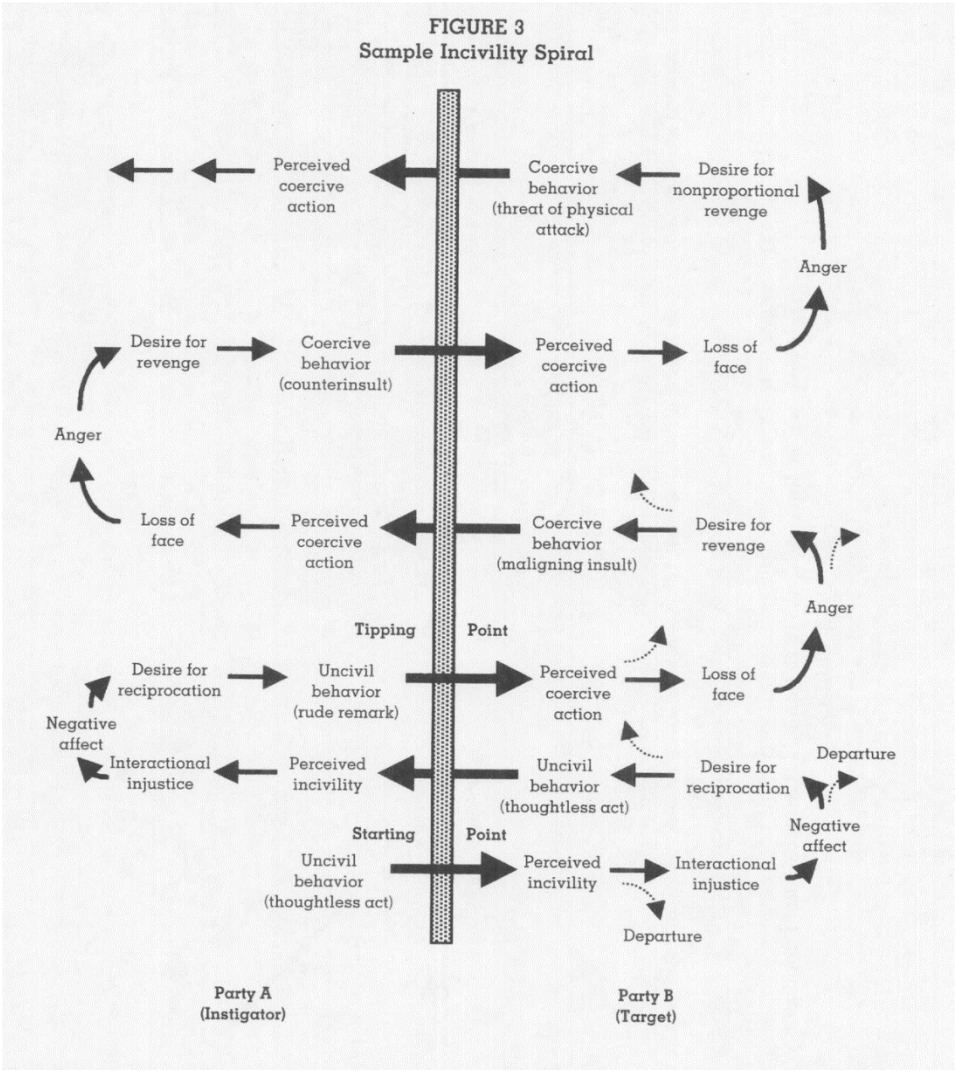


Figure 2. Linear gradient of mistreatment behaviours within the spiral model (Anderson and Pearson 1999, page 460)

Though the model used the term 'coercive action' it doesn't engage with power difference. In fact, it assumes both parties have similar levels of power in the situation, swapping roles as the target perceives an insult and sets out to retaliate. Consequently, the model assumes incivility to be a fairly benign misstep that could trigger a cascade of intensifying interpersonal mistreatment.

An alternate reading of incivility is that it can be used to subtly and not so subtly reiterate power difference in favour of the instigator. In such an alternate reading, incivility can be

used as a weapon to contribute to workplace bullying, abusive supervision, or workplace ostracism. However, the model of incivility does not present the disempowerment of the target, so it has difficulty relating incivility to constructs of interpersonal mistreatment where power imbalance is structural and/or developed over time.

There is also a question about the interim negative states that are pre-coercive behaviour but post-incivility. Is this a unique type of interpersonal mistreatment or is it an example of the overlapping space between coercive behaviour and incivility? Additionally, the spiral of incivility has difficulty with single incident high impact mistreatment that has no observable 'build up' such as acts of discrimination.

In summary, the spiral model clearly illustrates how a series of single incidents can intensify into a toxic relationship where power is equal between the instigator and the target. Further, it has the potential to relate two constructs such as incivility and revenge through progressively hostile dyadic interactions. The model allows for both escalation and de-escalation points. However, the broader question of the commonality among different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace remains unaddressed and the assumption that defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment are distinct and self evident is maintained rather than questioned.

Models that include the context beyond the dyad

Models of the conceptual space are visual representations that articulate how different spheres of influence come to bear on interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. There are a number of conceptual models in the literatures; Aquino and Lamertz model of workplace victimisation (2004) which highlights the interaction between organisational context, power, and instigator and target attributes; Branch's (2013) cyclical framework of workplace bullying[9] which draws on Affective Events Theory and contextualises bullying in the workplace with its interpersonal components and emphasises the iterative process of bullying developing over time; or Cortina's (2008) Integrated Model of Incivility as Modern Discrimination in Organisations which draws on social categorisation theory to relate incivility and discrimination (Figure 3), refer also to (Cortina & Areguin, 2021; Cortina et al., 2013; Cortina et al., 2017). In her argument of how incivility is a modern form of discrimination in

[9] This work was later revised into the Comprehensive General Framework of Workplace Bullying (Branch, Shallcross, Barker, Ramsay & Murray, 2021.

organisations, Cortina used a model to visually represent organisational norms, policy and leadership as nested within social traditions and social roles (Cortina, 2008, page 60).

Conceptual models can help researchers visualise new theoretical perspectives to interpersonal mistreatment research. Aquino and Lamertz (2004) sought to bring a relational perspective on the dynamics of mistreatment in the workplace using a role-based framework. They argued that "victimization of one person by another is a relational phenomenon involving their mutual role behaviors vis-a-vis each other" (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004, page 1025).[10] Aquino and Lamertz nest the perpetrator/victim dyad within spheres of influence which alter the possible responses and outcomes of the interaction (Figure 4). These influences include the work situation, formal and informal power differences, workplace culture, and access to social capital (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004).

FIGURE 1
Integrated Model of Incivility As Modern Discrimination in Organizations

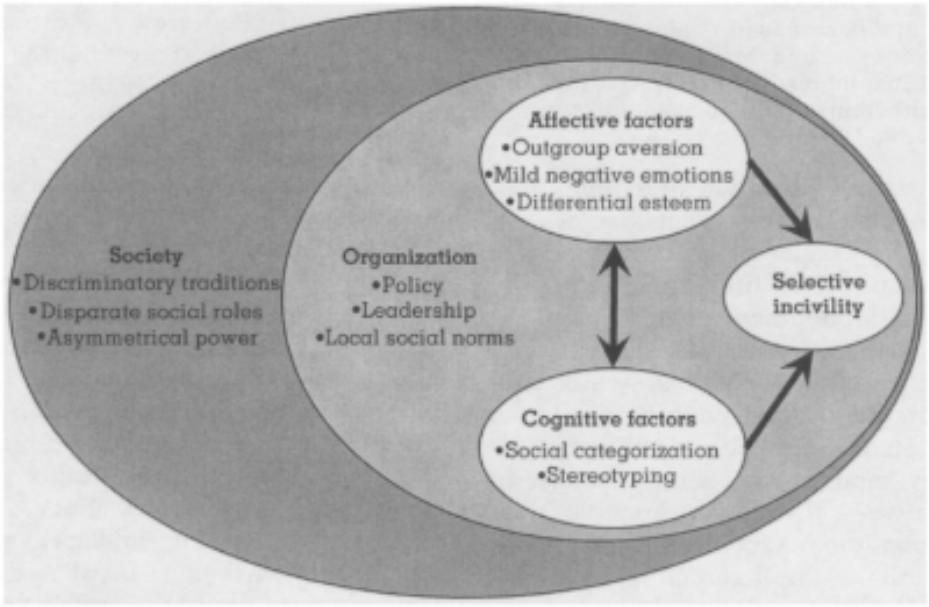


Figure 3. Cortina (2008, p 60) Integrated model of incivility as modern discrimination in organisations

[10] "There is a special case known as relational role (Barley, 1990; Nadel, 1957), defined as a set of characteristic behaviors that can only be performed in conjunction with a corresponding counter role and which designate patterns of interpersonal behavior by one status occupant toward the occupant of a specific other status (Nadel, 1957)" (Aquino, & Lamertz, 2004).

Figure 1. Victimization in the context of role relationships and organizational structure.

Figure 4. Aquino and Lamertz (2004, p.1024) model of workplace victimisation

As valuable as these models are for extending our frames of reference, their purpose is not to be a bridge between different defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. They are models for one construct or another.

Summary of issues in the literature

In summary, there are multiple technical matters for scale designers to engage with. These technical matters are not the main focus of this research although I do touch upon them as they arise.[11] There appears to be a methodological monoculture and positivist orientation to researching interpersonal mistreatment that is pervasive and entrenched. As Nielsen and Einarsen lamented when describing bullying as a dynamic social interaction;

> "…due to the overuse of cross-sectional research design ... most existing studies have provided nothing more than a series of 'snapshots' of the bullying phenomenon and little is known about how bullying actually develops and escalates for de-escalates over time (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018).

[11] The main focus of this thesis is a critical reflection on the conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment constructs as independent and qualitatively separate to each other.

This reflection on the bullying literature is equally relevant to other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Oddly, it also reflects the silos in the literatures. Nielsen and Einarsen did not reference Anderson and Pearson's incivility spiral, nor Branch et al.'s cyclical framework of workplace bullying, which reflects the narrow focus within the literatures of different constructs.

Furthermore, models of interpersonal mistreatment preserve the conceptualisation of defined and independent constructs. More advanced models conceptualise the process of deteriorating interpersonal mistreatment, and/or the contextual space of interpersonal mistreatment. However, in general these models have not been engaged by researchers to guide their research or generate hypotheses.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

In this section I investigate what 'under-theorised' looks like in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures. Then I consider conservation of resources (COR) theory and Social Identity/Self Categorisation Theory (SIT/SCT) as theoretical frameworks for this thesis. Writing this section highlighted to me how a-theoretical my own approach has been to the subject of construct proliferation. Like so many interpersonal mistreatment researchers before me, the research is not borne from theoretical considerations but from practitioners' concerns and applied challenges arising from the organisational context.

Here I ask what COR theory and SIT/SCT support in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures. What habits of mind do they challenge, and how can they guide this work? First I attempt to identify what under-theorised looks like and question if construct proliferation is an inevitable result of construct definitions being the dominant framework guiding research.

Ünal, Warren and Chen critiqued the way researchers avoid ethical questions when developing constructs saying that

> "…in the absence of a normative grounding, scholars have implicitly adopted different intuitive ethical criteria, which has contributed to confusion regarding unethical and ethical supervisory behaviors as well as the proliferation of overlapping terms and fragmentation of research" (Ünal et al., 2012)."

Which sounds a lot like the interpersonal mistreatment literatures.

What is 'a-theoretical' or 'under-theorised'?

While interpersonal mistreatment research is recognised for addressing an important social problem, it has also been critiqued for not being grounded in the theoretical domain (Gupta et al., 2020, p. 288; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018) (Salin & Hoel, 2013, p. 236; Ünal et al., 2012, p. 9; Volk et al., 2017) and has been described as having a and have been described as a 'functionalist' perspective (Samnani, 2013). Calls for developing our conceptual and theoretical understanding of interpersonal mistreatment come from all areas of the literatures. However, there appears to be a barrier to engaging with construct proliferation and construct overlap.

Distinguishing constructs through definitional terms, ignoring or avoiding the implications of overlapping constructs, and a tendency to attribute construct similarity to measurement error or lack of measurement specificity – all of these 'habits' for want of a better word, contribute to construct proliferation.

Construct distinction is often argued on definitional bases and the differences can be nuanced. For example, Barling, Dupré and Kelloway argued that workplace aggression and workplace violence are distinct constructs because, "By definition all violent behaviour are aggressive whereas not all aggressive behaviours are violent" (Barling et al., 2009, p. 673). With such fine lines drawn between constructs the critical differences in definitions and between measures can become blurred. One study by Kunkel, Carnevale and Henderson examined how incivility was operationalised in 55 different studies (Kunkel et al., 2015). They concluded that incivility measures are often edited to suit a new context but rarely validated, that the definition was 'soft' and overlaps with other constructs to the extent that it can become indistinguishable. Further, they suggested that researchers have attempted to make the incivility construct more tangible by using specific behaviours attributed as 'incivility behaviour'. They conclude that "these attempts seem to have narrowed the phenomena so specifically that it leaves out many aspects that should be included" (Kunkel et al., 2015, p. 114).

Tepper defended the use of multiple discrete constructs even when there is clearly some overlap between them (Tepper, 2007). He later explained the apparent overlap between constructs as a methodological inability to measure the distinctive features in the definitions

(Tepper & Henle, 2011, p. 847). In this way the situation exists where the critique is raised and then rebuffed in a cycle that effectively reinforces construct proliferation. Individual researchers make their attempt – as the review of models shows – but these innovations have not garnered widespread support or a gathering body of theoretical work. Often the highest level of theorising is the conceptualised antecedent and consequent variables.

Gupta, Gupta and Wadhwa conducted a systematic review of 167 past reviews, meta analyses, and systematic reviews of workplace bullying between 2008 and 2018. The aim of their work was to identify the core research themes of the article other than workplace bullying, and to identify the main objective of the article not directly related to workplace bullying (Gupta et al., 2020, p. 270). In this way they were conducting a review of intellectual positions that are often assumed or sublimated in the literature. They identified five core research themes; the conceptualization and forms of workplace bullying; antecedents of workplace bullying; consequences, mediators and moderators of workplace bullying; interventions for workplace bullying; and concerns related to human resource development in bullying situations. They concluded that the major focus of workplace bullying research is the antecedents and consequences of bullying and organisational interventions (Gupta et al., 2020, p. 286). In order to move the field forward Gupta et al. recommended that future research should be directed toward developing and establishing new theoretical models that specifically integrate workplace bullying with established theories, expand the scope of scholarly attention to organisational, societal and cultural drivers of bullying.[12] This work illustrates that, even as recently as 2020 the workplace bullying research literature continues to be under-theorised and that research was often a-theoretical.

Nonetheless the combined literatures are large and a sub group of researchers have applied multiple different theoretical lenses to their field of research. I use the bullying literature again as an illustration of these threads of theorisation. Monks et al. (2009) reviewed the bullying research and considered evolutionary theory, attachment theory, social learning theory, social cognitive theory, and sociocultural theories for their explanatory power of bullying behaviour. They argue that bullying is embedded in the culture of the organization where it is

[12] The four main recommendations were:
• Workplace bullying researchers need to develop and establish new theoretical models that "integrate the unique characteristics of the WB [workplace bullying] phenomenon and established theories for proximate research fields" (Gupta et al, 2020, p. 288).
• To focus on the organisational determinants of workplace bullying and concomitant interventions,
• Address the scarcity of research on gender differences, social and cultural determinants of bullying, and to
• Utilise alternative research designs to; establish causal links with respect to antecedents to and consequences of workplace bullying and investigate moderators and mediators to workplace bullying.

taking place. They concluded that an integrated form of all the theories was needed to account for the phenomenon of bullying.

> From these different research traditions comes a more unified approach to understanding bullying behavior. The presence of both situational factors (such as a lack of supervision or a hierarchical, authoritarian and non-democratic culture) and individual factors (including attachment, models for social learning, attribution style and other individual difference variables) make bullying possible and the presence of reinforcing factors enable it to continue. Reinforcing factors may include the response to bullying by the victim or the organization and a positive outcome for the bully for bullying (e.g., a gain in status or material goods). (Monks et al., 2009, p. 154)

More than a decade later Branch and colleagues developed the General framework of workplace bullying Branch et al. (2021) which situated workplace bullying within the different spheres of work life in a comprehensive manner. The framework also offers testable tenets, such as reinforcing factors, that could inspire future research.

Some researchers have identified their theoretical framework such as Bunk et al. (2011) and Felson and Tedeschi (1993) who adopted social interactionist theory, and Salin and Hoel (2013) who applied gender role socialisation theory and social dominance theory. Other researchers have incorporated a specific idea, for example norms and norm violations, without drawing upon the wider theoretical framework in which these ideas are embedded (for example Bies and Tripp's (2005) work on delineating revenge from workplace aggression and violence in the workplace). Overall, it is fair to say that Gupta et al. (2020) critique of the workplace bullying literature as lacking both conceptual clarity and a coherent theoretical framework is relevant to the interpersonal mistreatment literatures as a whole. This is under-theorisation. An a-theoretical stance would be academic work so focused on the methodology that the theoretical underpinnings of the construct – that is the interpersonal, organisational, social and cultural orientations - are simply not mentioned.

As a self-confessed a-theoretical applied researcher I will attempt to remedy this shortfall by engaging with two theoretical frameworks that are often applied in organisational research; Conservation of Resources Theory, and Social Identity/Self Categorisation Theory.[13]

[13] Of course, these are not the only theories that have been applied to interpersonal mistreatment research Branch, et al., 2021; Hodgins, et al., 2020; Linstead, et al., 2014) but at this point no one theory or set of theories has emerged as central to the interpersonal mistreatment literature.

Conservation of resources (COR) theory

What is COR Theory?

Since Hobfoll first posited the conservation of resources theory COR has become one of the most widely cited theories in organizational psychology and organizational behavior (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). COR theory describes what stress is, how individuals protect themselves from stress through acquiring and conserving resources, and how individuals respond to stress.[14]

> "Conservation of resources (COR) theory begins with the tenet that individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect those things they centrally value [resources]" (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 104).

Stress is defined as any threat to our resource base. COR theory posits that stress occurs under three conditions; (i) when central or key resources are threatened with loss, (ii) when central or key resources are lost, or (c) when there is a failure to gain central or key resources following significant effort. Interpersonal mistreatment aligns within COR theory as a source of stress (Tepper et al., 2017). The experience of any type of interpersonal mistreatment meets the definition of stress within COR theory.

Resources include '*things that people value*' which may be objects such as a place to live, but is often states or conditions such as health, well-being, family, self-esteem, autonomy, job security, opportunities for professional development, and a sense of purpose and meaning (Halbesleben et al., 2014, p. 1338; Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 104). With sufficient resources we can respond to immediate stresses. We can also build and sustain resources to protect ourselves against future need. According to Hobfoll, conservation of resources is a human evolutionary drive to acquire and conserve resources for survival.

COR theory highlights the cumulative nature of stress on the individual[15] which is an emphasis that is much in keeping with constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. That is, the

---

[14] "According to COR theory, targets exposed to negative act will gather resources to mitigate the adverse impact of negative acts. Targets' cultural values and norms will trigger: (1) appraisal of the perpetrators'' motives and intentions, (2) specific emotional reactions, (3) certain actions towards perpetrators, and (4) certain coping strategies. When targets' coping strategies are unable to generate sufficient resources to manage the bullying process, job performance and health are likely to suffer, which in turn, affect third-party observers" (Grimard & Lee, 2020, p. 446).

[15] "COR theory also highlights that stressful events are the wrong unit of analysis … Stressful conditions are seldom events; rather, they are complicated sequences that occur over time. … [workplace layoffs example] …

effects of mistreatment accrue over time to become debilitating. The impact of interpersonal mistreatment varies widely, and individual resilience among targets of interpersonal mistreatment varies. Nonetheless, interpersonal mistreatment is rarely a single event. Therefore, COR theory emphasis on conditions of stress represents the experience of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Furthermore, COR theory posits that when a person's resources are overstretched or exhausted, they will enter a defensive mode in efforts to conserve their remaining resources, so much so that they can become aggressive and may become irrational (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 105). Again, this is a marked similarity to models of interpersonal mistreatment that show a pattern of intensification with interpersonal mistreatment, see for example Andersson and Pearson (1999)'s spiral of incivility and the cyclical framework of workplace bullying proposed by Branch et al. (2013).

Application of COR to interpersonal mistreatment research

> "Bullying, or generic harassment at work is claimed to be a more crippling and devastating problem for employees than all other work-related stress put together and may be seen as a rather severe form of social stress at work (Wilson, 1991; Zapf et al., 1996; Niedl, 1995)" (Einarsen, 1999, p. 2 of 12).

Despite the wide use of COR theory in the organisational literature, it is rarely used to inform research or theorising in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures (Gupta et al., 2020, p. 288). The quote above by Einarsen indicates how stress is integrated in the conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment without engaging directly with a theory of stress. Those interpersonal mistreatment researchers who have engaged with COR theory span multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment such as bullying (Malik & Sattar, 2022; Teo et al., 2021), abusive supervision (Akram et al., 2019; Gazali & Zainurrafiqi, 2023), incivility (Alola et al., 2019; Hur et al., 2015), cyber bullying (Loh & Snyman, 2020), and sexual harassment (Alrawadieh et al., 2023). COR theory has been used to explain antecedents to abusive supervision (Lam et al., 2017; Tepper et al., 2017).

The level of engagement with COR theory can vary widely (for examples of less engagement see Gazali & Zainurrafiqi, 2023; Malik & Sattar, 2022; Tepper et al., 2017). Other researchers have more actively engaged with COR theory itself (for example Akram et al., 2019; Alola et

---

The reason that individuals' appraisals are generally good predictors is that most individuals are good catalogers of these complex objective elements—albeit, as COR theory emphasizes, people carry an evolutionary-based built-in and powerful bias to overweight resource loss and underweight resource gain" (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu & Westman, 2018, p. 105).

al., 2019; Hur et al., 2015; Lam et al., 2017; Loh & Snyman, 2020). The work of Teo (Teo et al., 2021) and Lam, Walter and Huang (2017) provide two examples of how COR theory is applied to interpersonal mistreatment research.

Teo et al. (2021) applied COR theory to understand the moderating effect of psychological hardiness (a resource) on the relationship between workplace bullying (a stressful working condition) and workplace accidents and injuries among nurses. They hypothesised that psychological hardiness is a protective personal resource which can be used by individual targets of bullying to buffer the psychological and physical impacts of bullying (Teo et al., 2021, p. page 4). Results showed that psychological stress amplified the effect of workplace bullying on accidents and injuries, and that psychological hardiness ameliorated this effect. In using COR theory Teo et al.'s study highlighted a challenge to an assumed tenet in the interpersonal mistreatment literature; that all interpersonal mistreatment constructs are different to each other in some critical way. In COR theory, workplace bullying is a stressor, which will have a similar pattern of effect on individuals as any other stressor that is not bullying. The fact that COR theory works so well to describe the hypothesised impact of bullying as a stressor indicates that – in COR theory – there is little about bullying that is unique to other stressors in the workplace. This engagement with COR theory demonstrates what under-theorised looks like in the interpersonal mistreatment literature. While 'a theoretical' can mean 'without reference to a theoretical framework', under-theorised refers to a partial engagement with a theory that avoids theoretical challenges to dominant assumptions in the interpersonal mistreatment literature.

Another example is Lam, Walter and Huang (2017) study of the impact of emotional exhaustion on supervisors' subsequent abusive behaviours. They conducted a study of abusive supervision at two manufacturing sites in China, one a male dominated workforce and the other a female dominated workforce. They drew on COR theory to hypothesise that supervisors' resource deficit was a key antecedent to abusive behaviours. COR theory suggests that extreme stress can induce an aggressive response in an individual.[16] Lam et al. leaned into this aspect of COR theory to hypothesise that loss of resources through emotional exhaustion can induce abusive behaviours in a supervisor.

[16] COR theory is primarily used to explain what stress is (a threat to or depletion of resources) and how individuals respond to stress and protect themselves against stressful events. In 2018 Hobfoll noted the application of COR to identify antecedent conditions to interpersonal mistreatment as a novel use of the theory (Hobfoll, et al., 2018.

Lam et al. found that resource loss, measured as emotional exhaustion, leads to abusive behaviours in supervisors *only* when specific conditions are met; when the supervisor is relatively low in self-monitoring, *and* the targeted subordinate is underperforming. “When these conditions are absent, supervisors appear willing to maintain civil conduct and avoid abusive supervision even toward perceived underperformers” (Lam et al., 2017, p. 1160). It is evident from this study that COR theory accounts for part of the drivers toward abusive supervision, but it is not a complete account of them. A limitation of this application of COR theory is a narrow appreciation of abusive supervision as being dependent on loss of resources incurred by the supervisor. While Lam and colleagues’ work demonstrate this link is part of the abusive supervision dynamic, it ignores other motivations for aggressive interpersonal actions such as a desire to accrue more resources through IM, or a workplace culture that normalises aggressive supervision. Furthermore, this application of COR theory does not account for the stressed supervisors who do not act abusively toward their staff – at least with the data presented. While one could argue that the non-aggressive supervisors may have more resources than their abusive counterparts, this is merely conjecture. Furthermore, Lam et al. did not write about the significant gender differences evident in the two samples, which pose the possibility of a systemic gendered basis for the development of abusive supervision in men. In short, Lam et al.’s use of COR theory is another example of partial engagement with the theory in as much as it supports their research.

Strengths and limitations of COR theory for this study

Conservation of resources theory provides a powerful framework for understanding interpersonal mistreatment as a stressor to targeted individuals. The papers noted above use COR theory to account for the flow of stress through a network of relationships. However, the researchers do not engage with the challenge that COR theory poses to interpersonal mistreatment theorising; that there is no difference between interpersonal mistreatment and any other stressor. In accordance with COR theory, interpersonal mistreatment threatens valued resources or depletes valued resources and is experienced as stress. If this is the case, then how is interpersonal mistreatment substantively different to other stressors in the workplace, such as new job stress, divorce, or the threat of workplace lay-offs? If we argue that interpersonal mistreatment is a unique stressor, on what basis do we assert that difference? Furthermore, are the different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment an artificial sectioning of a more basic stressor? From the perspective of this study, COR theory predicts an underlying construct of interpersonal mistreatment.

Nonetheless, COR theory has a limitation when it is applied to interpersonal mistreatment in that it does not distinguish between stressors. I would argue that interpersonal mistreatment is different to other stressors because it is innately interpersonal and intentional. The sometimes latent sometimes obvious intentionality behind interpersonal mistreatment is not well theorised in the interpersonal mistreatment literature and is not a key concern of COR theory. However, while interpersonal mistreatment can be enacted for many different reasons, very few would argue they are impersonal at least to the target. Interpersonal mistreatment is at heart an interaction between two people. Without a minimum dyad of an instigator and a target, there is no interpersonal mistreatment. Thus, the reasons why an instigator behaves in a derogatory way to a target is important to a theory of interpersonal mistreatment. True, sometimes interpersonal mistreatment is enacted due to the instigator's own stress without care for the negative impact to the target. Maybe an instigator believes they are being beneficent in their behaviour in a paternalistic use of power, or believes they have to make 'hard decisions'. It is entirely possible that instigators gain confidence or security by exercising power over others in a pejorative way. Regardless of the proposed rationalisation, in some way interpersonal mistreatment is an intended power play to establish the instigators superiority through the diminution of the target.

Social Identity and Self Categorisation theory (SIT/SCT)

Social Identity Theory and Self Categorisation Theory (SIT/SCT) were developed in conjunction with each other and can be collectively referred to as the 'social identity approach' (Haslam, 2004), but may be referred to by other phrases such as the 'social identity model' (Trepte & Loy, 2017), or social interactionism (Reynolds et al., 2010). SIT and SCT portray how identity is shaped by self categorisation, group membership and context salience. Here I introduce these theories, draw out how they have been used in interpersonal mistreatment research and how they can support this research endeavour.

What is social identity theory (SIT) and self categorisation theory (SCT)?

Social Identity Theory (SIT) arose from Tajfel and Turner's minimum group experiments in the 1970's. These experiments demonstrated the powerful influence of group identification on human decision making and behaviour (Haslam, 2004, p. 14). Tajfel and Turner posit that human beings have both a primary drive to belong to a group, and to develop and maintain a positive social sense of being. A person's positive social identity is drawn from favourable comparisons between one's own group membership and other saliant out groups (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Self Categorisation Theory (SCT) (Turner, 2004; Turner & Onorato, 1999; Turner

& Reynolds, 2012) articulates the relationship between the individual self, social identity, and the process by which aspects of identity become salient in a given situation. SIT/SCT asserts the following. SIT establishes that:

- Humans actively seek to feel good about their social identity and themselves individually.
- Group membership in humans, that is developing a positive social identity, is a primary psychological drive among humans.
- Social identity exists at some level in all circumstances. The minimum group studies illustrate how minimal this can be, in effect a single person and the idea of a group is enough to elicit in-group favouritism.
- In-group bias contributes to conflict between groups, particularly with respect to discriminatory behaviour, through processes that maximise positive differentiation; and in response to threats to in-group identity or social status.

SCT extends SIT to theorise:

- That the relevance of personal identity and social identity co-exist in any given situation, it is not one or the other.
- The concept of identity salience is how an individual's personal identity interacts with their social identity to influence beliefs, thoughts and actions in a given situation.

How does SIT/CRT help us understand interpersonal misconduct?

SIT/SCT allows that stress comes from different sources and may be responded to in different ways. As such SIT/SCT provides a rubric to investigate if interpersonal mistreatment exists as a series of distinct (if not quite mutually exclusive) constructs that follow the definitions in the literature, or if interpersonal mistreatment can be conceptualised differently. Furthermore, we can ask other questions, such as What role does interpersonal mistreatment play in the generation of positive social identity? Or as Haslam states: "How does a person's status and the perceived basis of that status affect the way they set about feeling good about themselves?" (Haslam, 2004, p. 24).

If we consider that interpersonal mistreatment is not merely a response to external or internal stimuli, but can also have a purpose for the instigator, then SIT/SCT enables questions to asked about the purpose or intent of the actions.

By moving away from the focus on individuals to a social identity focus SIT/SCT can help theorists identify and delineate the limits of the effectiveness of interpersonal mistreatment

for the instigator[17]. It can bridge the gap between observed individual behaviour and social and organisational context in which it occurs. In short, the breadth of SIT/CRT provides a structure to consider and test the function of interpersonal mistreatment within a given social situation.

How is SIT/CRT applied in interpersonal mistreatment research?

On the whole, interpersonal mistreatment research has not engaged with SIT/SCT.[18] One exception was a 2011 conceptual paper by Ramsay, Troth and Branch (S Ramsay et al., 2011, p. 800) who based several propositions on social identity theory. The authors noted that:

> "…work-place bullying is primarily conceptualized in the literature from an individual or interpersonal perspective with a focus on the victim. … Only a small amount of research exists, however, regarding the group-level processes that impact on the incidence and maintenance of bullying behaviour" (S Ramsay et al., 2011, p. 799).

Ten years later that was still the case. In 2021 Branch proposed that SIT was one of the group-based theories that "have emerged to explain workplace bullying (Branch et al., 2021, p. 96). This begs the question of why a theory that evolved from research about intergroup conflict has been largely sidelined by the interpersonal mistreatment research community. Possible barriers to engaging with SIT/CRT could be that:

- SIT/SCT are complex and subtle theories, which can be a barrier to engaging with them especially in the midst of a literature that is still largely focused on the individual as the target or victims of interpersonal mistreatment.
- SIT/SCT challenges the assumption that interpersonal mistreatment is by and large a fault or a failing of the instigator. SIT/SCT proposes a different way to understand how interpersonal mistreatment arises and is more appreciative of the interplay between personal and social identities.
- SIT/SCT poses a challenge for a literature that relies on definitions as the primary theoretical tool.

[17] SIT/CRT does not take a moralistic stance on interpersonal misconduct in that purpose or intent of interpersonal mistreatment is not necessarily to be destructive or disrespectful to others. The intention may be to enhance or protect the self.

[18] My examiners noted that SIT/SCT is engaged with more in the qualitative literature and the upwards bullying literature. For example Branch, Ramsay, Sheehan & Barker (2004) and Busby, Patrick & Gaudine, (2022).

A further perverse structural incentive is apparent at the level of institutional and industry funding. Researchers are rewarded for research output. This presents a structural encouragement for 'fast' theorisation or under theorisation in research. That is, there is no positive driver for interpersonal mistreatment researchers to engage with the theory.

Interpersonal mistreatment as a purposeful behaviour

SIT/SCT support the concept that interpersonal mistreatment is a purposeful act. The idea of interpersonal mistreatment as purposeful was also developed by Felson and Tedeschi in their conceptualisation of revenge, violence, and aggression in the organisational justice literature (Felson, 2009, 2018; Tedeschi, 1993; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994).

One study of workplace deviance by Bunk, Karabin and Lear (2011) asked perpetrators directly why they acted the way they did. The researchers applied a social interactionist perspective of aggression and violence, which holds a similarity to SIT/SCT in establishing one's identity. Bunk found that power and retaliation were important reasons for engaging in aggression and violence, but so was 'no reason' or habit (Bunk et al., 2011, p. 74). Their research hints that interpersonal mistreatment can be used to establish, protect, and/or empower one's identity.

From an SIT/SCT perspective, habits are an automatic way of re-iterating one's identity, based on previous learning. That is, the effectiveness of that behaviour has been learnt in the past, and it is now repeated with minimal deliberation by the actor. Following on from this, interpersonal mistreatment can be considered purposive. That is, on some level instigators believe their behaviours to be effective and legitimate.

Interpersonal mistreatment constructs of revenge, retribution, or retaliation involve righting a perceived injustice, which can extend to protecting and championing ones' in-group even if the perceived injustice was not personally directed to the instigator. The interpersonal mistreatment behaviour could be considered beneficial to the instigator and possibly also beneficial to the wider group or organisation. Workplace revenge captures 'an effort by the victim of harm to inflict damage, injury, discomfort, or punishment on the party judged responsible for causing the harm' (Aquino et al., 2006, p. 654). Revenge serves multiple purposes including restoring social order, restoring equity, strengthening the victim's social identity or status, as well as deterring future abusive actions (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004).

Tepper and Henle (2011), note that the 'revenge literature' argues that some deviant behaviours are functional by redressing injustices, restoring equity, and realigning dysfunctional power relationships. Behaviours that are ostensibly borne from a grievance and a wish to establish a sense of fairness on the instigators side are sometimes argued to be justified behaviours. Revenge is defined as a response to a grievance[19] by the victim to inflict damage, injury, discomfort, or punishment on the party judged responsible for causing the harm (Aquino et al., 2006, page 654). Similarly, retaliation has been defined as negative behaviours used to punish individuals or representatives of an organisation in response to perceived unfairness (Tepper & Henle, 2011, pp. 490, 491).

To illustrate, consider the moral boundary drawn around retaliation, retribution and revenge. In the main, we define and measure interpersonal mistreatment as described from the targets' perspective. That is, interpersonal interactions are labelled mistreatment when those behaviours are unwanted, unwarranted, and cause a level of harm to the targeted person. However, instigators of interpersonal mistreatment may use very different language to describe their interaction with the target, such as; not letting [the other person] 'get away with it', demanding respect, or justified retribution. Encapsulated in this thinking is that (i) mistreatment behaviours do not have a positive function unless they are motivated by retaliation or revenge, and (ii) righting a perceived wrong through vengeful behaviour can be desirable.

However, the idea that having a grievance can legitimate otherwise deviant behaviour opens a nest of ethical and theoretical problems, such as: When does an otherwise 'deviant' behaviours become 'useful' (therefore no longer deviant)? Useful to whom? and from whose standpoint should this be judged? Our current thinking about interpersonal mistreatment and how it functions in organisations is still very limited. In this space of grievance, revenge and retribution, SIT/SCT offer a theoretical framework to understand these actions without leaning into an assumed or overt normative stance.

[19] The term grievance refers to a judgment that one has been unjustly harmed by another person, a group, or an institution. Grievances are of interest to the current work as a grievance is often used to justify acts of interpersonal mistreatment, which fuels an escalation as captured by the spiral of incivility. Revenge is said to "serve multiple purposes including restoring social order, equity, or the victim's social identity or status as well as deterring future abusive actions" (Bies and Tripp 1995, in Tepper and Henle 2011, page 489).

Theoretical proposition: Interpersonal Mistreatment has an inherent functionality

From the above considerations, one theoretical element of all mistreatment behaviours is an inherent functionality for the person enacting them. That is, there is a desired outcome. Also, the manner in which actors rationalise their behaviour to themselves and to others adds to their sense of self and their social identity. In fact, upwards bullying researchers have identified that claiming victim status and pursuing revenge provides justification for perpetrating interpersonal mistreatment (Lorraine Busby et al., 2022; Patterson et al., 2018; Sheryl Ramsay et al., 2011).

Potentially, the constructs of retaliation, retribution, and revenge reflect perpetrator language and perpetrator points of view, rather than different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, distinct constructs, or morally superior conduct.

More broadly, if we consider interpersonal mistreatment (in all its' varied forms) in the light of the Andersson and Pearson (1999) incivility spiral, we can see that mistreatment may be an effective short-term solution to an immediate situation (put someone down, express situational or social power) but can be a poor longer term strategy if it initiates and accelerates spirals of conflict, damages friendships and creates enemies.

3.6 Summary of Theoretical Framework

Many researchers have critiqued the interpersonal mistreatment literature as being under-theorised or a-theoretical. I identified three elements that contribute to under-theorisation; the success of pursuing individual constructs; reified definitions and measurement tools; and avoiding challenges posed by theoretical frameworks.

Differentiated constructs have been a successful strategy for researchers to pursue for publication and subsequently for academic careers. Mining the rich vein of construct differentiation and describing antecedent and consequent variables to each construct separately has been highly rewarding and provided a large body of evidence regarding the antecedent factors and consequent impacts of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. In addition, the positivist approach has high credibility because it is validated through statistical procedures that demonstrate the validity of the

constructs. However, one of the unintended outcomes of the accepted research practice is that individual construct definitions and their concomitant operationalisations have become reified, so that they are accepted and utilised as scientific facts, which dissuades researchers from thinking differently. Further, the motivation to engage with meta theories is undermined through an over commitment to individualised constructs and the relative ease of working within the current literature silos.

- After three decades of research, a coherent theory of interpersonal mistreatment remains elusive.
- Researchers may adopt a theoretical framework to support research questions with regard to precursor, moderating, mediating or outcome variables. However, the theories are not used to examine the nature of interpersonal mistreatment itself, the relationship of one construct to another, nor to test the efficacy of different assessment methodologies.
- Alternately, researchers may appear to work in an a-theoretical space, reflecting the practical and applied origins of interpersonal mistreatment research.

Fortunately (or unfortunately) interpersonal mistreatment is so ubiquitous in human behaviour that most theories can offer some support and perspective on the topic.

In keeping with the literature, this research also started from an a-theoretical perspective. As I progressed with my research I engaged with COR theory and SIT/SCT to jolt me from my theoretical complacency. COR theory fundamentally challenges the assumption that different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment are qualitatively different to each other. SIT/SCT provide a basis for challenging assumptions in the literatures. Primarily for this research SIT/SCT proposes that interpersonal mistreatment is functional, it has a purpose and that purpose is about in-group identity and maximising differentiation between groups. In addition, SIT/SCT challenges the assumed normative stance in most writings of interpersonal mistreatment that interpersonal mistreatment is immoral.

4 Research topic, aim and RQs

To briefly summarise the literature review, interpersonal mistreatment is harmful to individuals, work teams and organisations. The interpersonal mistreatment literature suffers from construct proliferation, siloed literatures, methodological mono-culture, and under-theorisation. This thesis is concerned with understanding how different constructs of workplace interpersonal misconduct relate to each other. Essentially, I am asking how they are similar rather than how are they different.

Knowledge gap

This thesis is an enquiry into the conceptualisation and operationalisation used to investigate interpersonal mistreatment over the prior 30 years with an emphasis on appreciating the connections between constructs. I am wondering what is driving the distinction between constructs, and how both the commonality between constructs and the distinctiveness of each construct informs theorising about interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

Specifically, the commitment in the literatures to individual constructs has created a knowledge gap about the commonality between constructs and the basis of that commonality. Commonality may reside in the theoretical space of construct definitions, in the applied space of behavioural measures, or in the experience of interpersonal mistreatment across different constructs. In the process I will investigate alternative ways to think about interpersonal mistreatment, such as suggested by SIT/SCT and COR theory, and respond to the applied organisational need for assessing multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment simultaneously.

4.1 Research topic

There are gaps in the literature concerning how a construct is evaluated theoretically and how well the definitions are operationalised as distinct constructs, and perhaps more importantly, that there is little enquiry on what constructs have in common.

The topic of this thesis is this area of commonality. What is held in common between constructs? To what extent does the experience of interpersonal mistreatment co-occur even if they are distinct constructs to each other?

I pursue these questions with two studies. The first builds on Hershovis' work in comparing related constructs (Hershcovis, 2011; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Using established qualitative methodology, I take a critical view of the commonalities and assumptions within the researchers' writing about their focus constructs. I conduct a document analysis of seminal works on abusive supervision, incivility, workplace bullying, and ostracism. The second study builds on Notelaer's work in cluster analyses of bullying behaviours assessed by the NAQ-R. I apply cluster analysis to behavioural item data drawn from multiple disparate types of interpersonal mistreatment. The behavioural items data spans workplace bullying, cyber harassment, sexual harassment, and ostracism.

4.2 Research Aim

The overarching research objective of this thesis is to explore what is similar between different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment posited in the literatures. With this aim I examine similar constructs and dissimilar constructs. Firstly I explore the conceptualisation and operationalisation of similar constructs. Secondly, I explore the lived experiences of the targets of interpersonal mistreatment through a secondary analysis of behaviour items draws from diverse constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Out of scope

Out of scope of this thesis are the known methodological issues already canvassed in the literature and discussed above in section Method matters (p. 14), including technical design

issues, not measuring non-behavioural attributes, debates about estimating prevalence, and the methodological mono-culture.

4.3 Research Questions

RQ What similarities can be identified in the definitions and operationalisations of similar constructs of interpersonal mistreatment?

The first study acknowledges the theoretical work that construct definitions and their operationalisations carry for the field of interpersonal mistreatment research. By examining the definitions and measures of similar constructs the proposed theoretical distinctions between them can be assessed and any conceptual similarities can be articulated.

Study 1 involves a latent thematic document analysis of four key academic articles that define and operationalise four constructs that have acknowledged similarities. The four constructs are abusive supervision, bullying, incivility, and ostracism. These four constructs of interpersonal mistreatment are often discussed in relation to each other in the literature, often with the intent to highlight differences between them. Through the document analysis I explore constituents of similarity as well as acknowledging the points of dissimilarity expounded in the papers.

RQ To what extent do behavioural items from diverse constructs of interpersonal mistreatment co-occur?

Study 2 explores the co-occurrence of behavioural items drawn from diverse constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. This exploration of dissimilarity was made possible through behavioural items data drawn from an organisational survey that assessed multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. The dissimilar constructs include bullying, sexual misconduct, and cyber harassment. In Study 2 I expect behavioural items from dissimilar constructs to indicate a distinct profile of experiences. In Study 1 Behavioural items from similar constructs may or may not indicate distinct behavioural profiles. [20]

[20] This thesis is guided by the two research questions described here. A third enquiry was to explore the way the survey participant's point of view is engaged through the definitions and operationalisation of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. A part of this enquiry was to examine the concordance between the

behavioural assessment of bullying and sexual harassment and the participants' assessment of their experiences of bullying and sexual mistreatment. Although this line of enquiry was overtaken by the other findings from Study 1 and Study 2. It remains a keen interest of this researcher and a valuable topic for future research.

5 Research Methodology

This section discusses the research philosophy and methodological framework taken for this research. Research philosophy relates to the nature of knowledge as it pertains to the research problem under investigation. It answers ontological and epistemological questions as to the nature of reality and on what basis we can know things. The research philosophy contains important assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon under study.

This thesis is concerned with understanding how different constructs of workplace interpersonal mistreatment relate to each other. The nature of interpersonal mistreatment means it is not an objective physical phenomenon independent to the people involved. All participants in interpersonal mistreatment; the instigator, the target, the observing researcher, any third party or bystander, the manager who 'sees' or does not 'see' the misconduct, the investigator of a complaint, all these people have their own understanding of what interpersonal mistreatment is and what transpired between the instigator and the target. All of these people have a view of their social situation and a view of themselves as actors in that situation. That is, they have different subjective realities. Consequently, the people involved in interpersonal mistreatment may have very different conceptualisations of what interpersonal mistreatment looks like when it is enacted, and what is acceptable behaviour. Beyond the individuals involved, interpersonal mistreatment is contextualised through workplace norms and organisational policy. The research philosophy must embrace the inherently interpersonal nature of interpersonal mistreatment and the multiple valid viewpoints that an interpersonal phenomenon entails.

However, the research into interpersonal mistreatment over the past 30 years has been predominantly positivist and quantitative (Samnani, 2015). It is possible that the dominant positivist approach to interpersonal mistreatment research has inadvertently encouraged construct proliferation and discouraged a theoretical account of the commonalities between them. The process of defining a portion of the interpersonal mistreatment space as a construct, listing behaviours that exemplify the new construct, and then using those behaviours to validate the existence of the construct follows well established positivist practices. However, this approach will not let us examine their commonalities.

In response to these considerations, this research has adopted the support of philosophical pragmatism to investigate commonalities between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment using multiple methods. The purpose is not to undervalue positivist research, but to have a philosophical basis for investigating the dominant narrative through both quantitative and qualitative means.

5.1 Philosophical pragmatism

This research adopts a philosophical pragmatist view of what is 'real', or what can be known. Pragmatism is often described as a practical or common-sense approach to scientific endeavour that puts 'what works' as the foremost consideration in research design. However, that is a reductionist view of philosophical pragmatism. Morgan describes pragmatism as a philosophical system that disrupts theoretical arguments of what is real, or methodological orientations that are posed in opposition to each other, such as the ontologies of positivism and constructionism, or quantitative and qualitive methodologies (Morgan, 2014, p. 1045). Philosophical pragmatism enables us to both accept the reality of the physical world, while also accepting the socially constructed reality of human existence (Hothersall, 2019).

The roots of pragmatism can be traced to the Greek sceptics and their argument that it was impossible to achieve perfect knowledge or real truth and that we can only achieve 'plausible information' (Morgan, 2014; Ormerod, 2006). Modern pragmatism arose in the early 20th century from the work of Charles Saunders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey (Ormerod, 2006). Here I will briefly describe the tenets of philosophical pragmatism. Then I map out how philosophical pragmatism can be applied to research and how it is beneficial to the research I am undertaking here.

Creating knowledge is a uniquely human endeavour

Philosophical pragmatists consider that human knowledge making is an inherently human activity. That there is no 'truth' separate to human formulation of knowledge and that all people produce knowledge that is true for their situation through their own experiences and their reflection on those experiences. The following points highlight key elements of philosophical pragmatism.

1. The ontological arguments between realism and constructivism is a false dichotomy as they are 'two sides of the same coin'. The world external to us exists and the

reality of our interpretation of the world also exists. “Pragmatism rests on the argument that the meaning of an event cannot be given in advance of experience” (Denzin 2012 p. 81, in Morgan, 2014, p. 1046). The interplay between habits and actions (that is, experiences) give rise to enquiries about our world and our place in it.

> “One of the defining features of knowledge is that it acts as a belief, and one upon which we are (usually) prepared to act. Thus, our store of knowledge can be represented as a variegated system of beliefs that inform our actions” (Hothersall, 2019, p. 862).

2. Pragmatists consider that experience and enquiry are foundations of human life. This consideration, that knowledge is a result of human action, replaces earlier emphases on ontology and epistemology as separate considerations (Morgan, 2014, p. 1048). In pragmatism they are the one process when developing knowledge.
3. For knowledge to be knowledge, it must have some useful application in the world, and this is the test of the value of that knowledge. This is the ‘what works’ idea that pragmatism is often reduced to. It is through *inquiry* to solve a problem that new knowledge arises. Through inquiring about our habits, beliefs and experiences we develop a solution to a problem.
4. Experience, inquiry, and (in the next section) research are all founded on the iterative process of relating belief to action.
5. All knowledge is held as fallible, open to challenge and re-formation.
6. Knowledge is not independent to the experience it arose from. It is process-based; always reliant on the knower, the actions, and the context it arose from. For pragmatists, knowledge is “rooted in life itself - a life that was inherently contextual, emotional, and social” (Morgan, 2014). That is, knowledge is held both socially and individually through habits, beliefs, and warranted assertions.

Pragmatist research – a special type of inquiry

> “There is no sharp boundary between everyday life and research. Instead, research is simply a form of inquiry that is performed more carefully and more self-consciously than most other responses to problematic situations” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047).

Pragmatist research is a specific type of inquiry which Ormerod terms an *intelligent inquiry*, specifically a self-correcting method of testing hypotheses (Ormerod, 2006, p. 901). It follows all the principles of philosophical pragmatism discussed above, with a greater focus on method, rigour, and evaluating the knowledge based on its utility. Pragmatist research shares philosophical pragmatism's assertion that metaphysical debates about the nature of reality and truth are mind exercises that are unnecessary questions when identifying the value of an enquiry or the utility of the methods. The value of the research is found in the meaning arising from the research process and its practical consequence (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020, p. 1).

Like other forms of inquiry, research is embedded in historical and social context. This context influences research decisions; the types of questions asked, the choice of methods to investigate, the interpretation of analyses, and the implications of the findings. Research paradigms exert a powerful influence on what is meaningful and what actions are appropriate to generate meaning.

Pragmatism views different philosophies of knowledge – such as a positivist or constructionist ontology – as part of the social context the researcher brings to bear, rather than considering them as a priori ontological truths. Morgan writes, "assumptions about the nature of reality determine the kinds of knowledge that are possible" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1048).

> "Pragmatism offers a means for overcoming tensions and aporia in influential strands of contemporary theorising without necessarily requiring a complete renunciation of what has come before" (Gross (2018) p. 87 in Hothersall, 2019, p. 866).

By considering research paradigms as context rather than a priori truths, philosophical pragmatism is able to smooth tensions arising from abstract philosophical debate. So, for pragmatists it is more important to be aware of, and transparent about, the assumptions in our research paradigm than it is to 'believe' an ontological truth, or to wield it as a tool for denying the validity of knowledge derived from other paradigms. This approach enables multi-method and mixed-method research to inform each other as valid inquiries rather than opposing ontological stances.

When applied to organisation research problems, Kelly and Cordeiro found that a pragmatist approach was more useful than research philosophies that lay a *sole* emphasis on

abstraction or philosophical theory-generation because philosophical pragmatism (1) emphasised actionable knowledge, (2) recognised the interconnectedness between experience, knowing and acting, and (3) considered inquiry as an experiential process (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020, p. 1).

Dewey's five stages of research

Hothersall provided a five-stage general theory of inquiry from Dewey's *How We Think* (Dewey 1910/2007 p. 72, in Hothersall, 2019, p. 864) which links everyday inquiries to research inquiries in five stages:

(i) a felt difficulty [uncertainty; doubt]
(ii) identify the location and definition [problem identification and scope]
(iii) suggestion of possible solutions [theory application]
(iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion [inquiry research]
(v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection, that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief [reflection; phronesis[21]; philosophising].

The initial stage of Dewey's five stages of research is a felt difficulty, uncertainty or doubt. Of note is the role of emotions – rarely discussed in research fora – in the identification of what has become or is problematic. Usually, we jump to problem identification without acknowledging any non-intellectual origins of the problem statement.
This utilisation of the emotive response to an action, or belief, is a refreshing hallmark of philosophical pragmatism. It encourages us to utilise and account for all our faculties in research. It helps us to be aware of the hints and clues that experiences provide to us to discover something new.

As noted in my introduction, this program of research was inspired by a sense of disquiet about how the experience of interpersonal mistreatment was categorised, presented to research participants, and re-iterated in applied and academic settings. It is, however, a sense of curiosity that motivates the research to continue and come to fruition.

[21] Phronesis refers to practical wisdom or good judgment, particularly in ethical and moral decision-making. It is the ability to discern what's right and good in a specific situation. In Greek philosophy phronesis is considered a fundamental virtue, essential for living a flourishing life.

5.2 Axiology

Axiology refers to the role the researcher's values play in all stages of the research process (Saunders et al., 2009). Our values guide our interest and reasoning, our research choices, what questions we ask, our actions, and our interpretations of our analyses.

For philosophical pragmatists, the researcher's values are based in the context that the researcher brings to their inquiry. As Morgan writes, "pragmatism emphasizes that all aspects of research inherently involve decisions about which goals are most meaningful and which methods are most appropriate" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1050). In keeping with their position on ontological debates, pragmatists eschew abstract debates about what is good or worthwhile and replace them with considerations of the utility to solve human problems:

> To a pragmatist, the mandate of science is not to find truth or reality, the existence of which is perpetually in dispute, but to facilitate human problem-solving [within the context of] the value-base of the community of inquiry, its norms, research standards and ethics [which] all provide benchmarks to review the integrity, robustness, and governance of such processes of inquiry (Hothersall, 2019, p. 864).

In this way, philosophical pragmatism shifts the axiological considerations from an a priori philosophical stance on what is right or moral to emphasise human utility (Hothersall, 2019, p. 860; Morgan, 2014, p. 1051; Ormerod, 2006, p. 906). Pragmatists are not devoid of integrity, rather as shown in the quote above, research integrity is recognised as context bound, as are our standards for research credibility[22],[23].

Axiological statement for this research

Interpersonal mistreatment – conceptualised here as the attempt to gain or establish power through the abuse of another, such as undermining, diminishing, or subjugating another

[22] "Research never occurs in a vacuum, so how is it influenced by the historical, cultural, and political contexts in which it is done? And how do our research communities come together to emphasize one way of doing things rather than another? We need to pay more attention to how these factors influence both the choices we make and the ways that we interpret the outcomes of those choices. This is the path that pragmatism proposes" (Morgan, 2014, P. 1051).

[23] "Pragmatists place theory in the service of practice: …It is true that there is a strand of anti-intellectualism in pragmatism: … However, pragmatism is not against theory, it simply gives it a different, less exalted role. … theory should come out of a requirement of practice/action" (Ormerod, 2006, p. 906).

person – is a human interaction. The understanding of interpersonal mistreatment is created differently by different actors, and enjoys different levels of social sanction depending on one's era and context.

In the workplace, interpersonal mistreatment is known to cause severe negative repercussions to targets, bystanders, team cohesion, and organisational functioning. Australian workplaces are coming to recognise these negative impacts and Australian Work Health and Safety legislation lists psychosocial harm as one of the risks that Australian employers must mitigate against (Australia, 2022, 2024). As an employee I have experienced interpersonal mistreatment in my working life, but these experiences have not been recognised and addressed in the workplace. In part this is because the categorisation of interpersonal mistreatment is siloed, and the measures and reporting of interpersonal mistreatment are also siloed. My experience of interpersonal mistreatment at work is a confusion of these silos. This raises the question of what would it be like if the different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment were not siloed? How can we bypass the limiting effect of silos to assess the full experience of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace?

Values of the research

The research conundrum is born from a personal belief that interpersonal mistreatment:

(vi) is a self serving human trait that will never be expunged completely from human behaviour in the workplace;
(vii) is enacted for reasons, some of which appear valid and appropriate to the instigator, target, and/or the organisation;
(viii) involves destructive human behaviours that harm all those involved, but most immediately harms the target;
(ix) needs to be accurately described, theorised and assessed for us to gain a deep understanding to generate effective responses and to mitigate and heal from it; and
(x) research can be supported through philosophical pragmatism's approach to knowledge as a human endeavour that is the outcome of the interplay between experience and reflection.

Therefore, the underlying values that propel this research are a belief that a respectful workplace is best for all concerned and that interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace is destructive of a respectful workplace. Further, I believe that improving our understanding of

interpersonal mistreatment through critically reflecting on our current paradigms and measures is a key step in supporting respectful workplaces.

5.3 Research Methodology

In this section I outline the research methodology used, acknowledging that what is most important is whether the approach will enable a credible answer to the research questions rather than the ontological orientation traditionally associated with qualitative or quantitative research methodology (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 141). The diagram in Figure 5 illustrates the cascading methodological decisions made in this research, based on a modified version of the research onion developed by (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 107).

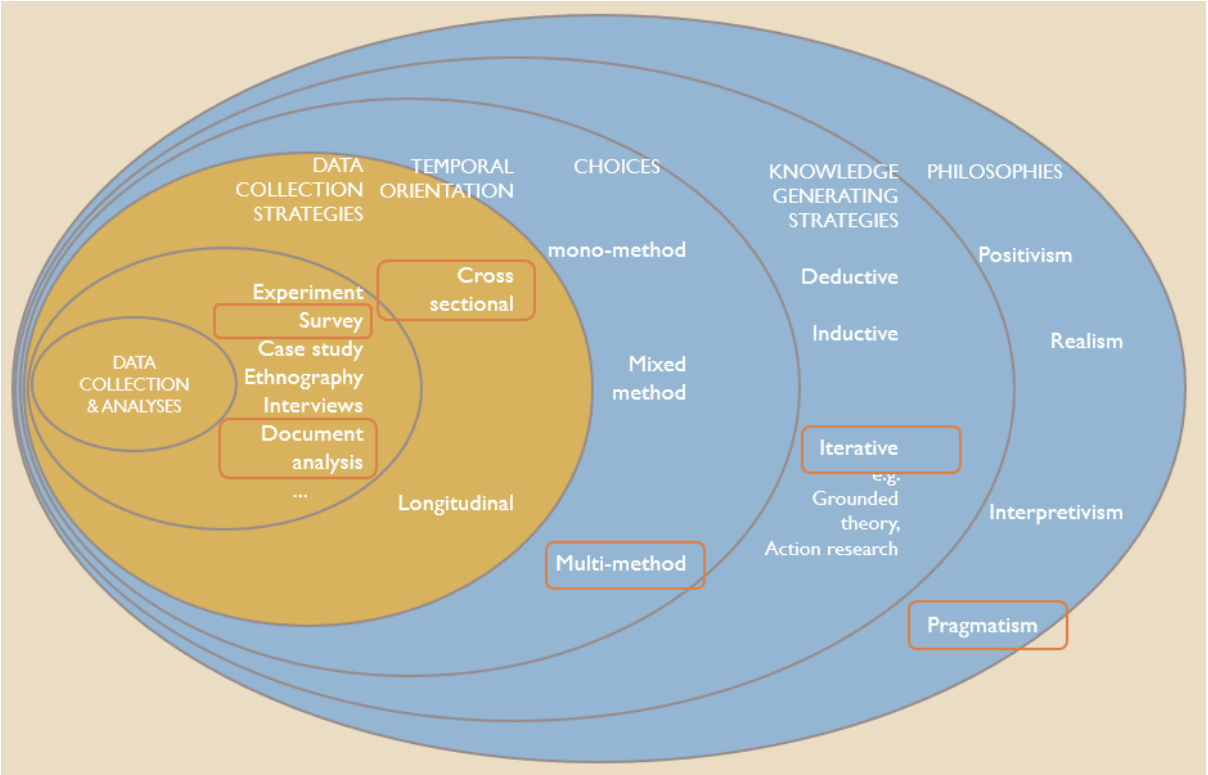


Figure 5. Saunders et al. 2009 research onion, adapted for this research methodology

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2009) research onion is a useful schematic to illustrate the methodological choices researchers make. The model moves from the most abstract considerations on the outer most ring, through to the most practical of data collection considerations in the innermost layer of the onion. Here the research onion has been modified to illustrate the decision-making process of the researcher. There is some re-

ordering of the considerations (that is, the order of the layers in the model) and some adjustments to the content of the rings. Reading from the outermost ring to the innermost ring:

(i) The methodological philosophies in the outermost ring remain unchanged. These considerations are the most primary to researchers and often times acted upon without close examination. Philosophical pragmatism is the framework for this thesis, indicated by the red boarder around *Pragmatism*.

(ii) The second ring, *Knowledge generating strategies* is renamed from *Approaches* to make the epistemological considerations more explicit. In keeping with philosophical pragmatism's aversion to ideological dualism, a third knowledge generating strategy is added to indicate that deductive and inductive reasoning can work iteratively together. Grounded theory and action research are offered as examples of iterative knowledge generating strategies.

(iii) The third ring *Choices* remains unchanged in content. However, the whole ring is moved from the 4th to the 3rd level of consideration. For myself as a researcher, the choice of mono, mixed or multi-method research lies within my full control and reflects the needs of the research objectives.

(iv) The fourth ring is renamed from *Time horizons* to *Temporal orientation* to better reflect organisational and practical influences on the choice of whether the research design is cross-sectional or longitudinal. These considerations are in the 5th ring of Saunders et al.'s mode, but here moved to the 4th ring because, for my decision-making process, the decision about cross-sectional or longitudinal design occurs prior to decisions about data collection strategies. At this point my decisions became increasingly influenced by both my prior choices and by practical considerations encountered in the research situation. This change is represented by a change in colour from blue to gold.

(v) The content of the fifth ring, *Data collection strategies*, was formerly the third ring in Saunders et al.'s model. It is moved to reflect that the choice of methodology is highly influenced by the research context as well as the objectives of the research. For example, mixed-methods research (now a 3rd ring decision) may use both cross-sectional and longitudinal data collection research designs (now a 4th ring decision), and may involve, say, quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies (now a set of 5th ring decisions). This ring is renamed *Data collection strategies* to make the concept more explicit. In addition, an ellipsis is added to emphasise that the list of data collection methods is limited to exemplars.

(vi) The sixth ring remains unchanged, *Data collection and data analyses*, apart from adding the plural *analyses*.

For this research, the ability of philosophical pragmatism to relate positivist and constructivist views as 'two sides of the same coin' (Morgan, 2014, p. 1048) is critical. Philosophical pragmatism enables multiple truths to be apparent without resorting to the need to claim one is superior to the other. This quality of philosophical pragmatism provides two advantages to this research. Firstly it enables the juxtaposition of positivist research into a relativist social situation (that is interpersonal mistreatment) to be valued for the knowledge it has yielded without ignoring the uneasy way these two perspectives sit together. Secondly, my work builds on a dominant positivist approach to interpersonal mistreatment research in the form of surveys and statistical analyses. However, I am attempting to do it a bit differently, with less emphasis on a priori assumptions.

Epistemology – how knowledge is formed

Philosophical pragmatism argues that knowledge is both a process and an outcome of inquiry. Knowledge generation is an essentially human activity that is gained through the process of inquiry. Further, knowledge cannot be separate to the process by which it was generated. This concept of the contextualised and socially held quality of knowledge fits well with the phenomenon of interpersonal mistreatment, which itself arises from human interaction and is interpreted in the social context from which it arises. There may be multiple 'truths' and none is more primary than another. Further, the idea that knowledge is a process rather than an objective fact is the foundation for the iterative development of knowledge central to philosophical pragmatism. Dewey's model of inquiry shown in Figure 6, illustrates how beliefs link with actions and through an iterative process result in knowledge (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047).

These five steps were mapped to the research process by Dewey (1910/2007 p. 72, in Hothersall, 2019, p. 864), as shown in Table 1. The key point here is the iterative nature of the process of inquiry, where reflecting on beliefs (prior assumed knowledge) gives rise to actions, and reflecting on the actions and the outcomes of those actions gives rise to changes in knowledge.

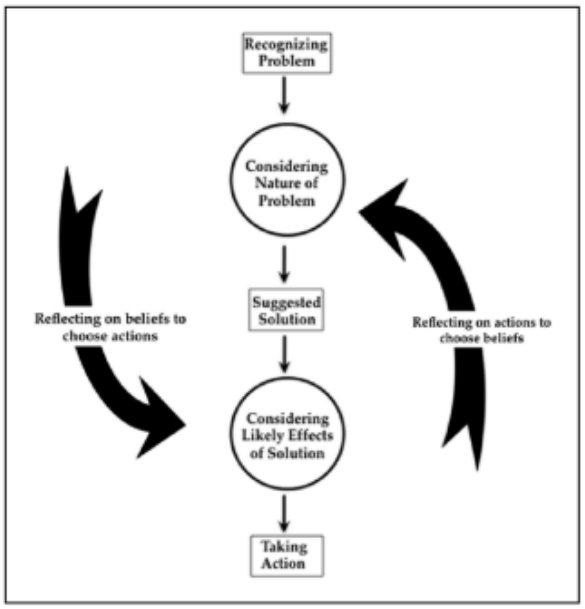


Figure 6. Dewey's model of inquiry

Table 1. Dewey's model of inquiry mapped to the research process

Five steps of pragmatic inquiry	Research process
1. Recognizing a situation as problematic, a sense of discomfort	Identify the research topic
2. The problem's location and definition [problem identification]	Identify focus of inquiry or RQs
3. Developing a possible line of action as a response to the problem, listing possible solutions	Developing the research design
4. Evaluating potential actions in terms of their likely consequences	Developing the research strategies. Data collection and analyses
5. Further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection, that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief [reflection; phronesis; philosophising]	Consideration of the results, conclusions and future research

The iterative quality of philosophical pragmatisms' epistemological approach supports this research design to build from one study to the next. It also acknowledges the tentative nature of 'truth' or knowledge as it currently stands as provisional on new information coming to bear on that knowledge.

Methodological choices, temporal orientation, data collection strategies

This research methodology is a multi-method cross-sectional design using two main studies, one a latent thematic document analysis and the other a secondary analysis of self-report survey data.

Multi-method research

The terms *mixed methods* and *multi-methods* describe research designs that use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to answer a particular question or set of questions. The purpose of combining different research methods is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic than if using one research method alone (Shannon-Baker, 2016; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012). This practice involves the collection, analysis, and integration of multiple types of data in a single or multiphase study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Hesse-Biber lists five reasons that researchers should consider using mixed methods (Hesse-Biber & Kelly, 2014, pp. 4-6).

1. Triangulation of methods, which provides credibility to research findings through the convergence of data collected by multiple methods.
2. Complementarity, which allows the researcher to gain a fuller understanding of the research problem and/or to clarify a given research result.
3. Synergistic effects, where the researcher's total understanding of the research problem is enhanced when results from one method develop or inform another part of the research.
4. Mixed or multi-methods can initiate further enquiry through questions or contradictions between the findings from different methodological studies. This provides another source of new insights to existing theories on the phenomenon under examination.
5. A fifth reason for doing mixed or multi-methods research is expansion of the breadth and range of the inquiry.

Philosophical pragmatism supports researchers to engage in data collection strategies that are typically held as positivist or constructivist avenues of enquiry by acknowledging the strengths and limitations of each, as this quote from Kelly illustrates.

> "Moreover, rather than questioning the validity and intrinsic value of certain methods and methodologies, pragmatism encourages researchers to base

> choices on the relevance of these methods and methodologies 'in terms of carrying us from the world of practice to the world of theory and vice-versa' (Kelemen and Rumens, 2012: 1)" (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020, p. 1)

A principle of multi-method research is that data collection and analysis using different methods is conducted independently rather than contemporaneously as it is in mixed method research. Maintaining a clear distinction draws out the unique findings provided by each method, in each data set, and from each series of analyses. This research program uses a multi-methods framework to enable the findings of the first study to inform the design of the second study.

Cross-sectional research

This research uses cross-sectional data, which is consistent with a research topic that is not focused on change over time. Rather the research topic is concerned with construct proliferation as it currently exists in the literature. Further, the research is not seeking to establish a causal relationship between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment and antecedent or consequent constructs.

By adopting a cross-sectional temporal orientation I also mirror the dominant research methodology in the literature, cross-sectional self-report surveys. This enables the research to explore how this type of research methodology can be used make inquiries about interpersonal mistreatment constructs in an alternate way to the prevailing method of inquiry.

Study 1 – latent thematic document analysis

The first study is a latent thematic document analysis of four seminal papers in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures. These papers present different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment and validate their respective behavioural measures. Nonetheless, these four constructs are also often discussed as having some relationship to each other. The constructs are abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and workplace ostracism. The document analysis will focus on the definitions, discussion of the definitions, behavioural measures, and validation of behavioural measures. Detail of the methodology is provided in Section 4 of the thesis. The outcomes of this study will inform the second study.

Study 2 – secondary analysis of behavioural data from organisational survey

The second study is a series of cluster analyses of behavioural items drawn from and organisational survey of a large government organisation. The survey included 31

behavioural items that were designed to assess participants exposure to interpersonal mistreatment of diverse types. The primary focus of the cluster analyses is to explore the co-occurrence of behavioural items in the survey. Detail of the methodology is provided in Section 5 of the thesis.

5.4 Summary of Methodology

Philosophical pragmatism provides a framework to bring divergent methodologies into mutually reflexive relationship. Importantly for me, it enables me to appreciate earlier positivist research for its informative value, rigour and resulting insights while also appreciate other methodologies as providing equally valuable insights about interpersonal mistreatment.

Philosophical pragmatism provides theoretical support for my conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment and as a bridge to mixed methods research methodology so that methodologies perhaps considered disparate in other systems of thinking resolve themselves to being equally valid methods to conduct one's enquiry and valuable means of triangulation. Dewey's process model for generating 'actionable assertions' marries with the interactive nature of interpersonal mistreatment and how each person involved in interpersonal mistreatment will be following their own processes to make meaning of the situation. Therefore, each point of view is valued for its contribution, rather than one being seen as inherently error prone and another being overly important.

The following two sections of the thesis will describe the two studies in more detail and discuss the findings of the studies.

6 Latent thematic document analysis to investigate theoretical and operationalisation similarities

Study 1 compares related constructs of interpersonal mistreatment through a latent thematic document analysis. The study critically investigates the commonalities in the authors' exposition of the construct, the argued differences between them, and identifies underlying assumptions evident in the texts.

For more than 30 years researchers have investigated interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. There is a large body of research that maps the relationships between precursors to, and consequent impacts from, interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Researchers have shown that being subject to interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace is associated with serious personal health consequences and negative organisational outcomes (for an excellent review see Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). During this time an array of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment have been posited and multiple constructs have their own research literature, including workplace bullying (Einarsen et al., 2003; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012); incivility (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013), abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000), workplace ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008), mobbing (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005), workplace harassment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Neall & Tuckey, 2014); and revenge (Aquino et al., 2006; Bies & Tripp, 2005).

Construct proliferation – specialization or fragmentation?

Construct proliferation is a feature of the interpersonal mistreatment literature and this proliferation has been critiqued as a barrier to theory building (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Crawshaw; Fox & Spector, 2005; Hershcovis, 2011; Hershcovis & Reich, 2013; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Neuman & Baron, 2005; Tepper, 2007; Walsh & Magley, 2014). For instance, the four papers analysed in this document analysis alone reference thirty-one different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, as presented in Table 2. The terms that reference multiple constructs and singular constructs of interpersonal mistreatment are identified in

different columns. However, many terms could be used as either group or singular constructs and it is unclear in the literature the extent that any could be synonymous with each other.

Table 2. Group and singular constructs for interpersonal mistreatment referenced in the four papers in the latent thematic document analysis

Group terms	Singular constructs	
Abuse of authority	**Abusive supervision	Overt aggression
Aggression	Antisocial work behaviour	Oppression in the workplace,
Aggressive behaviours	**Bullying & Workplace	**Ostracism,
Bullying & Workplace	bullying	Petty tyranny
bullying	Deviance	Psychological abuse
Generalised hierarchical	Discrimination	Retaliation
abuse	Emotional abuse	Revenge,
General mistreatment	Gender harassment,	Sexualised harassment & Sexual
* Interpersonal mistreatment	**Incivility & Workplace	harassment
Sexual mistreatment	incivility	Social undermining
Workplace aggression	Interpersonal aggression	Supervisor aggression
	Interpersonal conflict	Supervisor undermining,
	Mobbing	Victimization
	Negative mentoring	Violent behaviours
	experiences	Workplace aggression
	Obstructionism,	Workplace harassment
		Workplace violence

* group term used in this thesis

** constructs of interpersonal mistreatment included in the latent thematic document analysis

In the interpersonal mistreatment literature the concern over construct proliferation can be viewed as a debate about the value of differentiation over the value of integration, and when and why one should be pursued over the other (as discussed in section 3.2, page 11). Hershcovis (2011, p. 500) raised concern that the field of interpersonal mistreatment research was becoming fragmented because of numerous overlapping constructs. Alternatively, fragmentation can be viewed as specialisation, which is part of the process of a maturing discipline where researchers explore questions within a shared paradigm (Kuhn, 2012). Some researchers argue that the many individual constructs should be retained in all their variety (Barling et al., 2009, p. 673; Tepper, 2007; Tepper & Henle, 2011). Tepper reviewed the definitions of eight different constructs of non-physical supervisor hostility; abusive supervision, generalised hierarchical abuse, petty tyranny, victimization, workplace bullying, supervisor aggression, supervisor undermining, and negative mentoring experiences to established which, if any, were equivalent to abusive supervision (Tepper,

2007, pp. 263-264). Based on his reading of the definitions Tepper concluded that they were each conceptually different constructs, though supervisor aggression and supervisor undermining were sufficiently similar to abusive supervision that research of these constructs could be reviewed as a single literature. Nonetheless I argue that the focus on construct specialisation has been at the expense of a systematic investigation of the commonalities between constructs. There is currently a theoretical gap regarding the commonalities between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Study Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to surface the embedded ideas in four related constructs of interpersonal mistreatment and the operationalisation of those constructs. In so doing I hope to explore the theoretical shared space between them. This research extends Hershcovis' (2011) work by investigating both the overtly stated aspects of four constructs, as well as the imbedded positions evident in their exposition(s) through a latent thematic document analysis.

A latent thematic analysis looks beyond the semantic content of the text to identify and examine underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations and ideologies that are evident in shaping or informing the extant content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). A latent thematic analysis is a variant of thematic analysis and informed by thematic discourse analysis. It sits between the two poles of essentialism (realist ontology) and constructionism (relativist ontology) and, in keeping with philosophical pragmatism, acknowledges the social production of knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85; Keller, 2011, p. 43).

A document analysis recognises documents as 'social facts', in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. Documents have varying degrees of temporal permanence independent to the individual social actors who write and read them. They are versions of reality, scripted with a particular purpose in mind.

Documents, more so than conversations or interviews, are records of events that can transform the narrative of the event and can do so independently to both the author and the reader (Coffey, 2013, p. 5 of 17). Further, documents relate to other documents – intertexuality – which further establishes them as social facts independent to their authors and readers (Coffey, 2013, p. 5 of 17). These considerations are particularly appropriate to

academic articles because they are intertexually rich, archived and referred to over years and decades.

Research Question guiding the document analysis

This study addresses the first research question:

RQ What similarities can be identified in the definitions and operationalisations of similar constructs of interpersonal mistreatment?

The aim of this study is to explore the commonality between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment that are often differentiated from each other in the research literature; abusive supervision, bullying, incivility, and workplace ostracism. These four constructs are acknowledged to be similar but different in the literature, however the emphasis is always on their differences. By exploring these related constructs through a latent thematic document analysis, I expect to articulate the bases of similarity and perhaps also confirm the bases of distinction between them.

6.1 Methodology

In keeping with a constructivist view of the social construction of knowledge (Heil, 2003; Keller, 2011; Latour & Woolgar, 1979) this analysis utilizes latent thematic document analysis. Thematic analysis at the latent level holds that broader assumptions, structures and meanings underpin what is articulated in the text (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). I take the position that the definitions of interpersonal mistreatment constructs and the survey tools used to measure them are creative acts that simultaneously envisage and support a world view (Coffey, 2013, p. 8 of 17; Heil, 2003; Law, 2009, p. 240). A latent thematic approach is useful to surface the assumptions and tacit implications embedded within the closely written text of academic discourse.

Statement of orientation to the data

At this point I acknowledge the author's theoretical position with respect to qualitative research. Following Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 80) I do not subscribe to a naïve realist view

where the reader accepts the overt published statements based on research as fact. Rather, in keeping with a philosophical pragmatism I consider that all knowledge is provisional and context dependent. From this point of view, academic papers are persuasive arguments that frame a phenomenon in a way that sways the reader to the authors' point of view (Coffey, 2013, p. 5; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013).

This may appear to place the methodology of this paper at odds with the empiricist approach of the researchers and authors of the four constructs under analysis. However, the ontological stance is not to reject external reality, merely to acknowledge that we understand external reality through multiple lenses. Both the realist epistemology used in the papers and the interpersonal mistreatment constructs themselves are socially constructed ideas. The primary aim is to investigate the acknowledged meanings and the assumed meanings embedded in the measures, definitions, and associated discussions that together interact to create a construct of interpersonal mistreatment.[24]

Four papers and four definitions

Four constructs were chosen for the latent thematic analysis based on the frequency of citations in the literature and potential for commonality.

- **Abusive supervision**, measured by the Abusive Supervision Scale (Tepper, 2000), defined as "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).
- **Workplace bullying**, measured by the Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised (NAQ-Revised - Einarsen et al., 2009), defined as situations where an employee is persistently exposed to negative and aggressive behaviours at work primarily of a psychological nature, with the effect of humiliating, intimidating, frightening or punishing the target (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 25).
- **Incivility**, measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS - Cortina et al., 2001); defined as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" (Andersson and Pearson 1999 in Cortina et al., 2001, p. 64).

[24] The recent meta analysis of 167 papers by Gupta et al., (2020) has a similar orientation to their data, and used a similar staged process of open coding -> Axial coding -> Affinity diagramming. Their aim was to identify core research themes beyond the extant focus of workplace bullying.

- **Workplace Ostracism**, measured by the Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS - Ferris et al., 2008); defined as the extent to which an individual perceives that he or she is ignored or excluded by others (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1348).

These four papers were chosen because they are seminal research papers in the interpersonal mistreatment literature. These constructs are arguably distinct to each other definitionally, and have been statistically validated using rigorous statistical processes. Furthermore, these authors have shaped the debate about what is and is not interpersonal mistreatment. The range of constructs is restricted to these four in order to keep the analysis to a manageable size.

Analyses

A grounded theory inductive approach is adopted for coding. There are several reasons to use this approach. In this study the aim is to explore what is going on in an established area rather than verifying existing theory (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007, p. 3; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013) . The intention is to bring a fresh perspective to the way interpersonal mistreatment is conceptualized and operationalised in organisational research by allowing patterns and themes to emerge through the coding process rather than to approach coding with a priori themes or categories hypothesized to be in the data. The analysis process followed four major stages.

- First level of analysis was reading the texts and compiling research notes. This is a similar level of work to a literature review.
- The four journal articles and my initial comments about them were converted to text format, and entered into NViVO. The second level of analysis was open coding of theses texts.
- The third level of analysis involved moving the codes into themes and reflecting on the development of my ideas and the evidence for them. A pivotal consideration was to identify what was not included in the measures. I asked questions like ‘What is necessary to meet the definition here?’ and ‘Where is the participant in this idea?’ At this stage the coding and analysis was specific to each paper, and cross comparisons were only beginning to be formed.
- Comparisons across papers were a fourth level of analysis, which tested the generalisability of ideas about one construct to the other three. I focused on the following questions to the data ‘How does this idea, behaviour, or process shape this construct? How would it fit the other constructs?’

Developing and writing up data tables helped integrate my observations of the four papers and highlighted the behavioural tactics shared across constructs.

- Writing up the qualitative results involved a final iteration of analysis that highlighted some additional implications in the coding. For example, when writing up jokes/sarcasm/ridicule I realised that these behaviours indicate an escalation of the mistreatment because they were overt and could often involve a wider group of people outside the instigator-target dyad. Ridicule, jokes and/or sarcasm can indicate that the mistreatment is normalised, even comfortable, in that workplace.

The open coding of these papers resulted in almost continuous dense coding. Further, research notes extended to more than 30,000 words. The analysis produced an array of themes, ideas and detail. The refocussing process that the interviewer might do during an interview, is repeatedly applied during the coding process for the text analysis through the application of orienting questions to the researcher.

A note about the unique characteristics of analysing academic articles

While the process of analysing academic text is similar to analysing interview transcripts, the quality of the data is very different. Interviewees do not generally build an argument toward establishing a point of view. Interviews have a loose structure co-determined by the researcher's prompts and interviewees specific experience, knowledge and reflections. Interviewees may delve into anecdote or steer the interview to their own focus and interest, and the interviewer may follow by-lines of interest with the interviewee, but even if they digress interviews tend to be anchored to the research focus rather than the interviewee's interest.

Academic articles, in contrast, follow a formal structure and within that they follow the narrative determined by the authors. Each of the papers included in the analysis here is well crafted scholarly work and each word has an intended purpose to persuade the reader of the researchers' point of view about their research. They are in no way influenced by the reader, or in this case the current research endeavour, which happened years after the papers were published. Academic articles do not tend to acknowledge the authors' personal insights of their work, particularly those of a positivist nature. Such insights are presented as the logical outcomes of their research, or they are assumed stances within the work. Because of this, a latent thematic document analysis is particularly well suited to this endeavour of actively working with commonality between constructs rather than resisting it.

6.2 Findings of the latent thematic document analysis

Three major findings were evident from the open coding process:

- the fluid nature of the behavioural items in measurement scales,
- the porous boundaries of the definitions, and
- a series of embedded theoretical positions that limit alternative ways to conceptualise the phenomena of interpersonal mistreatment.

I will first report my findings about the behavioural measures, because the nature of the definitions is heavily influence by them. Then I report about the porous nature of the definitions, then my findings about the theoretical positions embedded in the papers.

6.3 Behaviours are shared and malleable

To understand better how the behavioural scale items functioned to measure the different definitions I undertook a separate analysis of the behavioural items. The combined scale items from the Abusive Supervision Scale, the NAQ-R, WIS, and WOS were 54 behaviours.

Initial coding of the behavioural items did not resolve into groups equivalent to the constructs they measure. A behaviour listed as incivility could just as easily represent abusive supervision, workplace bullying, and/or ostracism. The exception was ostracism. While all behaviours that were both indirect and excluding could be used to measure this construct, none of the more direct behaviours from abusive supervision, bullying or incivility could be included as a measure of ostracism as defined by Ferris et al.

What became apparent was the flexible nature of each behaviour listed in the measurement scales. One behaviour can be enacted multiple different ways, a characteristic that made the behavioural items applicable to multiple constructs. This analysis identified seven different ways or tactics that could change how a behavioural item was enacted.

Seven tactics – ways a behavioural item can be enacted

Seven different behavioural tactics were identified during coding. Behaviours can be; direct or indirect, overt or covert, involving third parties (or not), ridicule (or not), manipulation (or not), denigration (or not), and isolating or including the target. These are labelled ‘tactics’ because they are potentials of the behavioural items. Not constructs or types of interpersonal

mistreatment per-say, but processes used to enact behaviours in a way that makes them unwanted, unwelcome, humiliating or otherwise painful. For example, being reminded of your errors or mistakes (an NAQ-R item) may or may not be an act of bullying, depending on whether it is enacted in a derogatory way. It could also be enacted with respect in an appropriate situation. Table 3 presents a summary of the potential tactics evident in each behavioural items and Table 4 provides the details of the 54 behavioural items from the combined scales.

Each behavioural item coded against three to five different tactics. That is, each behaviour could be readily enacted in three to five different ways. The possibility of using different tactics, and different combinations of tactics, demonstrates that behaviours are fluid and situational.

Which tactics are emphasised will depend on many situational factors including the level of tolerance in the workplace for these behaviours. For example, the abusive supervision item *Makes negative comment about me to others* can involve four separate tactics. It could be indirect to the target depending if the target is present during the comment, it is likely to be overt (that is recognisable to others), it involves third parties, and it is likely to be manipulative because it involves using slander to influence how other people view the target. Now I will describe the tactics in more detail.

Direct or indirect

Behaviours are direct when the derogatory message encoded in the behaviour is delivered directly to the target, for example being *Ordered to do work below your level of competence* (an NAQ-R item). Indirect behaviours interact with the target in a round-about way, such as through a third party. For example, the impact of *Makes negative comment about me to others* (an Abusive Supervision Scale item) is indirectly felt by the target through changed attitudes toward them in the workplace. Each behavioural item could be identified as direct, indirect, or possibly either. All four measurement scales included both direct and indirect actions toward the target and this emerged as a point of similarity across the four constructs.

Among the papers' authors, Einarsen, Hoel and Notelaers (2009, p. 26) acknowledged that behaviours could impact the target either directly or indirectly. Ferris, Brown, Berry and Lian argued that ostracising behaviours are often ambiguous and that they did not acknowledge the target (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1349) which suggests that ostracism involves only indirect behaviours. However, this analysis identified two behaviours in the workplace ostracism

scale that act directly on the target, *Others shut you out of the conversation* and *Others refused to talk to you at work*. These behaviours imply that the target is present and that the instigator behaviour is impacting them directly when they are enacted. Therefore, exclusively indirect behaviours are not a distinguishing attribute of the WOS.

Table 3. Summary of tactical potentials in the behavioural scales

Tactical potentials	*** AbSup 15 items**	**NAQ-R 22 items**	**WIS 7 items**	**WOS 10 items**
Direct / Indirect to the target	12 Direct 2 Indirect 1 either	15 Direct 3 Indirect 4 either	4 Direct 0 Indirect 3 either	3 Direct 7 Indirect
Covert, behaviours that can be hidden	6 Covert	13 Covert	6 Covert	6 Covert
Involves third parties	3 items	6 items	3 items	3 items
Joke, sarcasm, ridicule	2 items	3 items	-	-
Manipulation	3 Lies/slander 3 Coercion	3 Lies/slander 2 Coercion 9 Undermine	1 Lies/slander 1 Coercion 3 Undermine	-
Denigration	Personal Professional	Personal Professional	Personal Professional	-
Isolation	1 Exclude 1 Ignore	4 Exclude 1 Ignore 2 either	2 either	1 Exclude 7 Ignore 2 either

* Note. AbSup - Abusive Supervision Scale; NAQ-R – Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (Workplace bullying); WIS – Workplace incivility scale; WOS – Workplace ostracism scale

Table 4. Tactical attributes of abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and ostracism scale items

Behavioural items	*Direct Indirect*	*Covert Overt*	*Involves 3rd party*	*Ridicule*	*Manipulate*	*Denigrate*	*Isolate*
ABUSIVE SUPERVISION							
1. Ridicules me	Direct	either	May involve 3rd	Ridicule		Person	
2. Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid	Direct	Overt				Person	
3. Gives me the silent treatment	Direct	Covert					Ignore
4. Puts me down in front of others	Direct	Overt	Involves 3rd party	Sarcasm, ridicule		Person or work	
5. Invades my privacy	Direct	Covert					
6. Reminds me of my past mistakes and failures	Direct	Covert				Work	
7. Doesn't give me credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort	Indirect	Covert			Coercion		
8. Blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment	either	Overt	Involves 3rd party		Lies, slander, undermining		
9. Breaks promises he/she makes	Direct	Covert			Lies slander		
10. Expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason	Direct	Covert			Coercion		
11. Makes negative comments about me to others	Indirect	Overt	Involves 3rd party		Lies slander		
12. Is rude to me	Direct	Covert	May involve 3rd			Person	
13. Does not allow me to interact with my coworkers	Direct	Covert					Exclude
14. Tells me I'm incompetent	Direct	Covert				Work	
15. Lies to me	Direct	Covert			lies slander		
NEGATIVE ACTS QUESTIONNAIRE – REVISED							
1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance	Indirect	Covert			undermining		Exclude

Behavioural items	*Direct Indirect*	*Covert Overt*	*Involves 3rd party*	*Ridicule*	*Manipulate*	*Denigrate*	*Isolate*
2. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	Direct	Overt	Involves 3rd party	Sarcasm, ridicule		Work	
3. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	Direct	Covert			undermining		
4. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	Direct	Covert			undermining		Exclude
5. Spreading of gossip and rumours about you	Indirect	either	Involves 3rd party		lies slander	Person	
6. Being ignored or excluded	either	Covert					Exclude or ignore
7. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life	Indirect	Overt	May involves 3rd		lies slander	Person	
8. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger	Direct	Overt			coercion	Person or work	
9. Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way	Direct	Overt					
10. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	Direct	Covert			Undermining	Work	Exclude
11. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	Direct	either	May involve 3rd		Undermining	Work	
12. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	either	Covert					Exclude or ignore
13. Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes	Direct	Covert			Undermining	Work	
14. Having your opinions ignored	either	Covert					Ignore
15. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with	Direct	Overt	Involves 3rd party	Joke			
16. Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines	Direct	Covert			Undermining		

Behavioural items	*Direct Indirect*	*Covert Overt*	*Involves 3rd party*	*Ridicule*	*Manipulate*	*Denigrate*	*Isolate*
17. Having allegations made against you	both	Overt	Involves 3rd party		Lies, slander, Undermining	Person or work	
18. Excessive monitoring of your work	Direct	Covert			Undermining	Work	
19. Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses)	Direct	Covert			Coercion		
20. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	Direct	Overt	Involves 3rd party	Joke, sarcasm		Person or work	
21. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload	Direct	Covert			Undermining		
22. Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	Direct	Covert					
WORKPLACE INCIVILITY SCALE							
1. Put you down or was condescending to you	Direct	Covert			Undermining	Person	
2. Paid little attention to your statement or showed little interest in your opinion	Direct	Covert					either
3. Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you?	either	Overt	Involves 3rd party		Lies, slander	Person	
4. Addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately	Direct	either	May involve 3rd		Undermining	Person or work	
5. Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie?	either	Overt	Involves 3rd party				either
6. Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility	Direct	Covert			Undermining	Work	
7. Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters	Direct	Covert			Coercion		
WORKPLACE OSTRACISM SCALE							
1. Others ignored you at work.	Indirect	Covert					Ignore
2. Others left the area when you entered.	Indirect	Covert					Ignore

Behavioural items	*Direct Indirect*	*Covert Overt*	*Involves 3rd party*	*Ridicule*	*Manipulate*	*Denigrate*	*Isolate*
3. Your greetings have gone unanswered at work.	either	Covert					Ignore
4. You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work.	Indirect	either	Involves 3rd party				either
5. Others avoided you at work.	Indirect	Covert					Ignore
6. You noticed others would not look at you at work.	Indirect	Covert					Ignore
7. Others at work shut you out of the conversation.	Direct	Overt	Involves 3rd party				Exclude
8. Others refused to talk to you at work.	Direct	Overt					either
9. Others at work treated you as if you weren't there.	Indirect	Covert					Ignore
10. Others at work did not invite you or ask you if you wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break.	Indirect	either	Involves 3rd party				Ignore

Notes : Ridicule includes 'jokes' and sarcasm. Ridicule is identified as behaviours intended to entertain or appear humorous to a third party.

Manipulation includes coercion, lies, and acts that make others complicit such as slander, and undermining

Covert (or overt) behaviours

All four behavioural scales included items that could be enacted overtly or covertly, however the scale items were predominantly behaviours that could be enacted covertly. That is, they could be subtle, kept secret from third parties, or the intention could be kept secret from others. For example *Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job*, an NAQ-R item, could be kept secret from third parties. In addition, all four scales included a few items that could only be overt in their execution, such as *Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie*, a WIS item that involves a third party dynamic.

The overt or covert nature of most interpersonal mistreatment behaviours was not theorised or discussed by the paper's authors. Arguably, overt behaviours indicate a confidence on the part of the instigator that these behaviours are appropriate, or at least will not gain sanction from others. Covert behaviours signify that on some level the instigators recognised that the behaviours could draw sanction from others.

Involving third parties

The inclusion of third parties was common to all four behavioural scales. Involving third parties encourages a tacit complicity in those who are bystanders, adding further insult and embarrassment from the targets point of view. For example, *Others at work shut you out of the conversation*, a WOS item, makes all those in the conversation complicit in excluding the target.

In a similar way to overt behaviours, including third parties represents an escalation of the workplace aggression because it involves more people. It demonstrates the instigator's dominance to colleagues in the workplace and also risks challenge about the mistreatment behaviour by third parties. The implications of involving third parties were not discussed by the scale developers.

Ridicule

Items involving 'jokes', sarcasm, and ridicule are coded as a subset of behaviours that involve third parties. These are items that indicated mistreatment was used as a source of entertainment for the instigator, for third parties, or both.

The Abusive Supervision Scale and the NAQ-R include a 'jokes' item, for example *Puts me down in front of others* (an Abusive supervision item) and *Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm* (NAQ-R). Neither the WIS nor the WOS included behaviours that could be passed off as humour. Theoretically, the WIS could include acts of sarcasm or inappropriate humour, but these tactics were not evident in the measurement scale.
Ferris et al. argue that ostracism does not engage directly with the target. In keeping with this aspect of their definition, it is appropriate that the WOS does not include 'joking' behaviours.

As with overt behaviour and including third parties, ridicule indicates a level of confidence that the mistreatment is acceptable. In this way it can be seen as normalising mistreatment in the workplace. The scale authors did not discuss this attribute of behaviours.

Manipulation

Nearly half of the items in the combined scales involved manipulation - lies, slander, coercion, undermining, and/or gaslighting. Manipulation can be direct, such as direct coercion for example, *Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines* (an NAQ-R item) and *Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters* (a WIS item). Manipulation can also be indirect to the target, through slander or undermining, such as *Blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment* (an Abusive supervision item).

Manipulating behaviours involve the target in a double bind that makes them complicit in or accepting of the mistreatment. Manipulating behaviours force acquiescence from the target through various means, such as; the direct abuse of power, the threat of possibly escalating the conflict, reinforcing the mistreatment in the process of trying to combat it, being forced into a 'my word against yours' situation, or being labelled as a complainer.

The effect of manipulating behaviours is to establish and/or reiterate a power imbalance between the instigator and the target. The Abusive Supervision Scale, NAQ-R, and the WIS include these types of behaviours. Manipulating behaviours are not evident in the WOS items, however indirect manipulation contributes to excluding the target, so could be consistent with Ferris' conceptualisation and operationalisation of ostracism. The scale authors did not discuss this attribute of behaviours.

Denigration

Denigration is an attack on the targets' personal qualities or professional capabilities. The Abusive Supervision Scale, NAQ-R, and WIS all include items that denigrate the target either

professionally or personally, for example *Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work* (an Abusive Supervision item).

Einarsen et al. (2009) distinguished theoretically between work-related and person-related behaviours in the NAQ-R, but did not discuss denigration as a tactic or as a type of behaviour. The Abusive Supervision Scale and the WIS included denigrating behaviours, but did not discuss this type of behaviour. The WOS did not include any denigrating behaviours, however, it can be argued that indirect denigration of the target is consistent with Ferris et al.'s theorisation of ostracism.

Isolating behaviours

All four behavioural scales include isolating behaviours. Two types of isolating behaviours were evident in the scale items; excluding behaviours that engaged with the target directly, and ignoring behaviours that engaged indirectly or ambiguously with the target. Some behaviours could be either excluding or ignoring depending on circumstances, such as *Others refused to talk to you at work* (WOS). Ferris et al. (2008) did not draw a distinction between actively excluding and passively ignoring the target, preferring to view all the behaviours in the WOS as indirect. All authors discussed the isolating quality of being targeted by interpersonal mistreatment, however, apart from Ferris et al.'s operationalisation of ostracism, the authors treated all behaviours as contributing to the isolation of the target.

Combining tactics - nesting, overlap, escalation

Behavioural tactics – the different ways a behaviour can be enacted - can be combined and layered. They are not mutually exclusive. Figure 7 provides a conceptualisation of how the tactics relate to each other. The relative size of the circle indicates the proportion of items coded to that tactic.

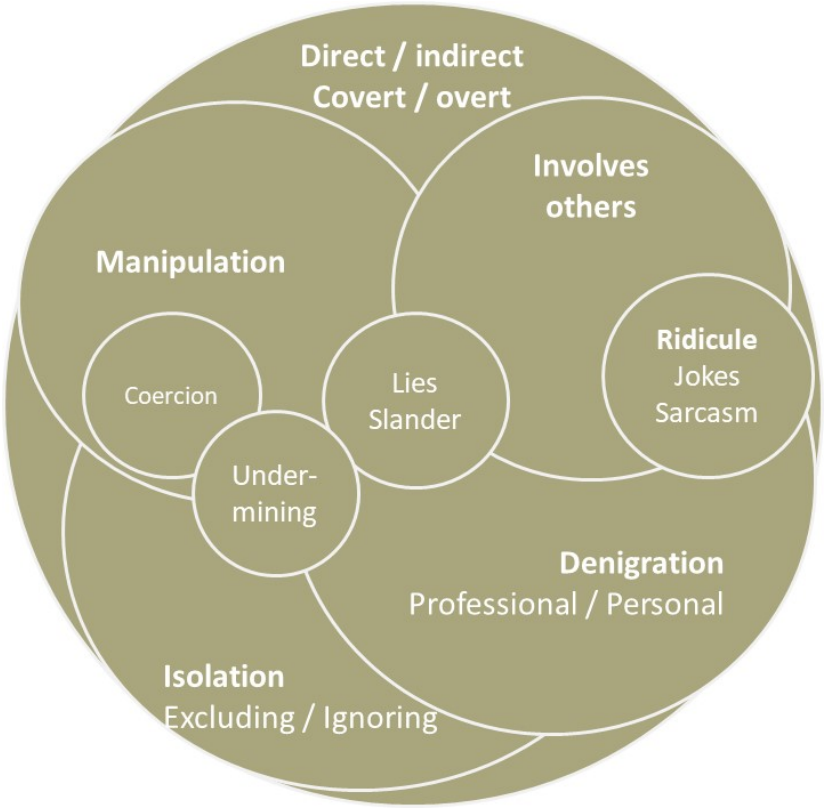


Figure 7. Conceptual diagram of the relationship between tactics

All behaviours could be coded as either direct or indirect to the target, and as either covert or overt behaviours. Hence these tactics are represented in the largest circle. The remaining tactics are nested within this circle. These circles overlap with each other to represent the patterning identified in the coding. For example, a behaviour passed off as a joke such as *being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm* (an NAQ-R item) is likely to involve others besides the instigator and the target, but it may be just the target and the instigator. To represent these possibilities, the ridicule circle largely overlaps with involving others, but is not nested entirely within it. Further, teasing and sarcasm can be humiliating or intimidating behaviours and without any wider context, the 'joke' may involve personal or professional denigration. Hence the ridicule tactic overlaps with the denigration tactic. However, the figure cannot display all the potential combinations of ways a behaviour can be expressed. For example, ridicule may contribute to the isolation of the target, may be part of a process of manipulation and so on.

Tactics as indicators of escalation or normalisation

The use of different behavioural tactics may indicate an escalation of the mistreatment, normalisation of the mistreatment in the workplace, or both. Thus, behaviours enacted

covertly and/or indirectly can imply that the behaviours are not acceptable in the workplace or that the instigator is being cautious. Behaviours enacted overtly, directly, and/or involve third parties may indicate that the instigator is confident their behaviour will be accepted in the workplace. Alternatively, overt tactics could indicate that the instigator doesn't recognise the behaviours as interpersonal mistreatment.

Relating abusive supervision, workplace bullying, workplace incivility, and workplace ostracism through behavioural tactics

The Abusive Supervision Scale, the NAQ-R, and the WIS include a range of behaviours that can be enacted using all seven behavioural tactics. In that sense these behavioural scales reflect a similar range of behaviours. The WOS includes items that exclude or ignore the target, involve third parties, are covert, and are either direct or indirect to the target. The WOS does not include behavioural items that use ridicule, manipulation, or denigration, which reflect the boundaries that Ferris et al. placed on the concept 'ostracism'. Nonetheless, behaviours that use ridicule, manipulating or denigrating tactics could theoretically be included in a measure of ostracism because the effect of those behaviours is to isolate the target. This point is argued in more detail below.

The differences between the four behavioural scales used to measure incidence of interpersonal mistreatment are a matter of emphasis on one type of tactic or another. For example, the abusive supervision items are more often direct and overt compared to items in the other scales. This is consistent with Tepper's definition of abusive supervision as being a 'sustained display', implying that abusive supervision is about overt behaviours. However, not all abusive supervision items are direct and overt. Consequently, this is an emphasis within the scale, not unique characteristic of the construct. The NAQ-R and the Abusive Supervision Scale include items involving jokes, sarcasm, or ridicule, while the WIS and the WOS did not. This is consistent with Ferris' conceptualisation of ostracism, but not consistent with Andersson and Pearson's definition of incivility which could include snide, sarcastic or 'joking' behaviour.

Summary of findings related to behavioural tactics

An initial reading of the behavioural items indicate that common behavioural content belies arguments for separate definitional constructs. However, an unexpected finding from the latent thematic document analysis was the identification of potential ways of enacting the behaviours – here named behavioural tactics – which can explain how a single behaviour may be representative of multiple different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Tactics are not interpersonal mistreatment constructs themselves, but are the processes used to enact the behaviours used to measure these constructs. For example, *Being reminded of your errors or mistakes* (an NAQ-R item) may or may not be an act of bullying, depending on how it is enacted. It could be enacted in an appropriate context and with respect, such as when giving constructive feedback. Theoretically, this implies that a behaviour - in and of itself - is not interpersonal mistreatment. It is the way the behaviour is enacted that determines if it is interpersonal mistreatment. The array of tactics attributed to each behaviour demonstrate the flexibility of these behaviours when applied in different contexts. Furthermore, throughout the coding process the behavioural items from the four scales failed to coalesce around the respective constructs. A behaviour listed as incivility, could just as easily represent abusive supervision, workplace bullying, and/or ostracism. Tactics demonstrate that different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment can be related to each other by a substrata of behavioural elements. Furthermore, tactics may convey meaning independently to the ostensible behaviour in the item. Three tactics are thought to indicate an escalation of interpersonal mistreatment: overt behaviours, behaviours that involve third parties, and ridicule.

In this study, the behaviours used to measure the four constructs share tactical potential, that is behaviours could be enacted in shared ways. The differences between constructs were based on emphasis rather than one construct being measured by a unique set of behaviours.

The exception was ostracism, as all passive aggressive isolating behaviours could be grouped under this construct's definition. However, other behaviours also result in the target feeling ostracised (such as spreading rumours). My conclusion is that Ferris et al.'s operationalisation of ostracism is focused on one tactic – isolating behaviours. However, the construct of ostracism is more complex than a single tactic. Ostracism is the result of overt and direct behaviours, as well as covert and indirect enactments of interpersonal mistreatment. Later Rudert et al. (2019) determined that Ferris' et al's idea of ostracism is one of two mechanisms toward social exclusion. Ostracism-based exclusion involves passive

aggressive behaviours such as ignoring a person, and active rejection which involves direct attention paid to the target (Rudert et al., 2019, p. 2).

The observation that the ostracism construct operationalised by Ferris et al. is a single tactic construct has implications for interpersonal mistreatment theorists. We need to ask ourselves how broad or narrow a construct must be to have both theoretical value and operational specificity so it can be measured distinctly to other constructs. It may be that operationalising a tactic is a more useful way to conceptualise a unique aspect of interpersonal mistreatment than pursuing a defined construct of interpersonal mistreatment. Additionally, if a tactic can also be a construct in its own right, then the narrow focus of such a construct needs to be reflected in the nomenclature and theorisation of the construct.

6.4 Definitions with porous boundaries

In this section I report results about the shared conceptual space between the four constructs that are acknowledged by the authors or evident in their writings. Common ground with other constructs include:

- Acknowledgment of overlap
- Ambiguous and intentional intent
- Harm – a measure of impact and proof of concept
- Power difference is central
- Under theorisation of the physicality of behaviour
- Shared nomological net
- Other concerns

In providing the results I have given at least two examples for the points made. I refrained from walking the reader through each and every observation for each of the four constructs, as this would make the results section inordinately long and repetitive. Table 5 summarises the construct attributes identified through the latent thematic document analysis.

Acknowledged overlap with other constructs

These papers were chosen because they held similarities, and the authors also acknowledged overlap with other defined constructs. Here I provide examples of overlap between workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism.

Workplace bullying

While Einarsen et al. linked workplace bullying to incivility, harassment, and aggression, they emphasised that bullying was distinguished from other constructs by persistence over time rather than individual behaviours, and acknowledged that single behaviours may appear as 'incivility' (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 26), a comment that acknowledges behaviours may be held in common across constructs.

Incivility

Cortina, Magley, Williams, Hunter and Langhout readily acknowledged the similarity between incivility and other types of interpersonal mistreatment. Incivility is conceptualised as part of a related set of interpersonal mistreatment constructs, specifically; workplace violence, aggression, bullying, tyranny, harassment, deviance, and injustice (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 64). Cortina et al. suggest that the behaviours included in the WIS reflect the most common behaviours in the workplace bullying scale developed by Einarsen and colleagues (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 68). Yet they also argue that incivility is distinct to other types of interpersonal mistreatment, based on the instigators ambiguous intent to cause harm, and that the harm is of no greater harm than 'routine nuisances in everyday life' (p.65). However, the authors also acknowledge that "When unambiguous intentions and expectations to harm the target or organization are present, definitions of incivility overlap with psychological aggression" (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 64).

Table 5. Construct attributes in definitions and discussion

Theme	Sub themes	Abusive Supervision	Workplace Bullying	Workplace Incivility	Workplace Ostracism
Context	Physical workplace	Yes	Yes	(Yes)	(Yes)
Commonality	Overlap with other constructs acknowledged	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power	Formal power difference between instigator and target	Yes	(Yes)	(Yes)[25]	(No)
	Evolving power difference	-	Yes	-	Yes
	Targets are powerless to stop it	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Harm	Harms the target	(Yes)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Harm is cumulative over time, hyper-sensitising	Yes	Yes	(Yes)	Yes
	Intensity of experience	Yes	Yes	No	(Yes)
	Severity of impact	Yes	Yes	(Yes)	(Yes)
	Includes physical contact	No	Yes	No	(No)
	Social harm, Impact on group membership[26]	(Exclude ostracise)	(Exclude ostracise)	(Exclude ostracise)	Exclude ostracise
Instigators	Group or individual	Individual	Either	Either	Either
	Intention to harm	Ambiguous or intentional	Ambiguous or intentional	Ambiguous or intentional	Ambiguous or intentional
	Affect expressed	'Hostile'	'Aggressive'	-	-

[25] (Yes) Power imbalance is not in the definition of workplace incivility (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 66; Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 26). However those with formal power are more likely to act with incivility toward those with less authority.

[26] Impact on group membership – all authors theorised that intention to leave will increase and organisational commitment will decrease as a consequence of experiencing behaviours attributed to their construct of interpersonal mistreatment.

Theme	Sub themes	Abusive Supervision	Workplace Bullying	Workplace Incivility	Workplace Ostracism
Types of behaviours discussed	Direct overt interaction between instigator and target	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Engaging via third parties (e.g. rumours, gossip)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Passive (acts of omission)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Jokes, sarcasm	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
	Distinguishing between work related and personal behaviours	-	Yes	-	-
Other	Moral wrongness of instigators' behaviour	Yes	Yes	(Yes)	(Yes)[27]
	Defined from the 'targets perspective'	Yes	(Yes)	(Yes)	Yes
	Targets perspective sought	No	No	No	No
	Gender, age differences	-	-	Marginal	Nil
	Prevalence in the study	-	31% /6 months	71% /5 years	(>54%) /6 months

' – ' indicates not discussed or not measured

'( )' indicates indirect acknowledgement in the definition and discussion.

(>54%) indicates prevalence was estimated from information in the paper.

[27] For incivility and ostracism, the moral wrongness of the behaviour is implicit in the alignment of the construct to positive organisational & personal outcomes. However, it was not directly discussed. Two examples:

- "When one is ostracized, one presumably believes that such treatment is unwarranted and disrespectful. … Thus, we would expect that feelings of interpersonal injustice should co-occur with ostracism" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1354).
- "To measure convergent validity, we correlated the WIS with Donovan et al.'s (1998) PFIT scale. Because the latter instrument assesses perceptions of (or climate for) interpersonally fair or civil treatment in the workplace, it should be highly negatively correlated with personal experiences of rude, uncivil behaviors in the same environment. A Pearson correlation of -.59 confirmed this hypothesis (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 70).

.

Ostracism

Ferris et al. (2008, p. 1355) limit ostracism to acts of omission that involve ignoring or avoiding the target and they make careful distinctions between ostracism and other types of interpersonal mistreatment. They acknowledge that excluding and isolating behaviours are part of other constructs, specifically interpersonal deviance, workplace bullying, workplace aggression, and social undermining. Nonetheless Ferris et al. consider exclusion and isolation behaviours as a distinct construct to other broader "aggregate" constructs that have previously subsumed ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1350). Ferris et al. also concede that "ostracism can be classified as a form of social undermining". Yet they argue that ostracism is separate from social undermining on the basis of two technical points. They argue that ostracism behaviours do not communicate verbally with the individual; and that ostracism does not involve the intention to hinder the targets' advancement (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1355).

Power difference: formal, informal, accrued

The power difference that exists between instigators and targets of interpersonal mistreatment render the targets powerless to stop it. While this is seen as a defining characteristic of workplace bullying, power difference is also vital for abusive supervision, incivility and workplace ostracism.

Abusive supervision

The formal power relationship between a supervisor and staff is central to abusive supervision. The abusive supervision scale items are introduced with the prefix "My boss …", which clearly sets the behaviours in within two different levels of the organisational hierarchy. Anchoring of the construct in formal organisational roles sets the abusive supervision construct apart from workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism which all acknowledge informal power differences and developing power differences. Tepper illustrated the powerlessness of targets by the increased distress of targets who were unable to change jobs. He considered that some employees may have barriers to quitting due to economic or practical reasons (Tepper, 2000, p. 180). His study identified that subordinates in an abusive supervision situation with low mobility were more strongly correlated with negative outcomes that subordinates who were able to leave the abusive supervision situation.

Workplace bullying

In workplace bullying, an imbalance of power and the consequent difficulty of a target to defend him or herself is integral to the construct (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 26). Nonetheless, formal power difference it is not necessary for bullying to occur and is not included in the definition. The power difference can evolve so that the target becomes increasingly powerless in the situation (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 25). In keeping with this orientation to power, while some NAQ-R items involve a formal power difference such as *Being ordered to work below your level of competence* which indicates formal authority, most behaviours could be enacted by a work colleague.

> "Most importantly, the nature of the bullying experience in terms of its frequency and long term duration of exposure to negative acts tends to drain the coping resources of the target, thus in itself emphasizing the increasing powerlessness of targets (Leymann, 1996)" (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 26).

The target being powerless to stop the bullying is a key characteristics of workplace bullying that is enunciated in discussions, but not included in the definition of the construct.

Incivility

Formal power is not important to the definition of incivility. In theory a staff member can be uncivil to superiors, team mates, and/or subordinates alike. In practice, formal power is associated with uncivil behaviours (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 75). Cortina et al. discuss this with respect to social power theory. They argue that workplace incivility can function as a means of asserting power.[28] Indeed, Cortina et al., found that judges were disproportionately named as instigators of incivility in their study and that role status affects vulnerability to abuse (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 74). The instigator's rudeness may be a conscious or unconscious demonstration of privilege which reinforces their relative power status in the workplace. In later work Cortina and colleagues advance the argument that incivility is a mechanism by which racism and sexism is perpetuated in US work organisations (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013). In this way incivility is aligned with abusive supervision in that it is conceived as reflecting and reiterating the existing power imbalances in the workplace. Unlike workplace bullying and ostracism, an evolving power difference is not featured in their discussion about incivility.

[28] "Social power theory suggests that some manifestations of workplace incivility may function as a means of asserting power (Carli, 1999; Fain & Anderton, 1987; French & Raven, 1959; Johnson, 1976; Murrell, 1996; Pryor & Whalen, 1997). Conversely, individuals lacking resources are at greater risk for having power exerted against them. Applied to an organizational context, employees with lower social power may be more vulnerable to such abuse" Cortina et al., 2001, p. 66).

While power is discussed by Cortina et al., they do not address whether a person is able to stop the incivility or not, nor do they discuss how this relates to the construct of incivility. Given Cortina et al.'s commitment to the ambiguity of intent, the ability of a target to counteract or stop incivility may be highly situational. Some situations – such as with an uncivil supervisor – may render the target powerless, while other situations – such as peer to peer incivility – the target may have more power to change the situation. However, where a target is unable to protect themselves from incivility, then the powerlessness of the target is the same as for the other constructs.

Ostracism

Power difference is not an overt part of the definition of the ostracism construct. Yet the powerlessness of the target is highlighted in Ferris et al.'s discussions and is crucial to the experience of being ostracised. They argue that the experience of being ostracised emerges through the recurrence of excluding behaviours.

> "the more the individual perceives that he or she is being subjected to such [excluding or isolating] behaviors, the more the individual feels that he or she is being ostracized" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1349).

While a single experience of being excluded can also be ostracism, albeit a temporary one (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1349), make it clear that a feeling of being ostracised arises from the cumulative impacts of ignoring and excluding behaviours. It becomes more severe as these experiences are repeated by others and/or continues over a period of time. Consequently, it is the nature of ostracism to develop over time in a fashion that the target cannot retaliate against it. This is the same process described for the experience bullying.

The four constructs demonstrate that abuse of power is a core element in these constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Intent - ambiguous or intentional ?

The four construct definitions vary in the emphasis placed on the protagonists' intent to harm the target, and incivility claims ambiguous intent as a feature that sets it apart from other constructs. However, the concept of intent is a fraught one in these papers. Each author posits a stance about intent and then modifies that stance to include both intentional and unintentional motivations for engaging in interpersonal mistreatment.

Abusive supervision

The definition of abusive supervision clearly states that it involves hostility, an emotion that indicates intention to harm. However, Tepper argues that the supervisor may be indifferent toward the subordinate, or the hostility may not be intended to harm the subordinate but be directed elsewhere (Tepper, 2000, p. 179). In addition, Tepper further explained that behaviours in different contexts could be experienced as abusive or not abusive by the same individual (Tepper, 2000, p. 179). Consequentially, intent to harm may or may not be present in abusive supervision and does not distinguish abusive supervision from the other constructs in this study.

Workplace bullying

The definition of workplace bullying includes the idea of aggression from the instigator to the target, which indicates an intention to harm.[29] However, the intention of the instigator is not a characteristic that bullying scholars focus on to distinguish bullying from other constructs. The conceptualisation of bullying hinges on the behaviours persisting over time which has the harmful effect. The recurrence of behaviours is the distinguishing characteristic of bullying as it demonstrates bullying as a process rather than as a single event (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 28). Therefore, intentional or unintentional interpersonal mistreatment both contribute to the construct of bullying.

Incivility

Cortina argues strongly that ambiguous intent to harm is a key difference between incivility and other constructs (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 64). Yet they also allow that incivility can be either intentional or unintentional. While incivility can occur through instigator ignorance or oversight, it can also occur with negative intention on the part of the instigator. The intent perceived by the target may be correct (that is, what the instigator is consciously feeling toward the target) or incorrect. Specifically, targets can misperceive the instigators' intention through 'misinterpretation or hypersensitivity' (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 64). The role of ambiguity of intent remains a theoretical grey area in the construct of incivility. At face value, rudeness that is intended or unintended is still rudeness, though one might go about responding to it differently depending on the perceived intent. In addition, the WIS does not

[29] "Workplace bullying (the persistent exposure to interpersonal aggression and mistreatment from colleagues, superiors or subordinates) … as situations where an employee is persistently exposed to negative and aggressive behaviours at work primarily of a psychological nature, with the effect of humiliating, intimidating, frightening or punishing the target" (Einarsenm et al., 2009, p. 24, 25).

assess the intentionality of the instigator, so it is not part of the assessment of incivility, even though intention is given prominence in the definition.

Ostracism

Similar to incivility, Ferris et al. argue that ostracism may not involve intention to harm the target or as they put it "hinder the targets' advancement".[30] They state that "Ostracism need not be intentional or punitive" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1349). While they acknowledge that intention can intensify the experience of ostracism, they also argue that not knowing if the excluding behaviours are intentional can add to the psychological harm felt by the target (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1349). Consequently, the authors recognise that ostracism can be enacted with overt or ambiguous intent, and even without any intent to ostracise the target at all.

In summary, the intentions of the instigator is a poor delineator between these four constructs. A general theory of interpersonal mistreatment would need to address the role of intent. For example, what is the role of workplace, or even social norms with respect to intentionality? How necessary is the concept of intention in generating measures or assessments of interpersonal mistreatment?

Harm - Measuring impact / proof of concept

The characteristic of recurrent experiences accumulating harm is shared across the four constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Through the mechanism of recurrence, a power imbalance develops at the expense of the target and this adds to the experience of harm. Abusive supervision is defined as a 'sustained' series of behaviours enacted by the targets' superior. Similarly, persistent negative experiences is a core characteristic of bullying, more so than the type of behaviour itself (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 25). Which the authors recognise as making incivility and bullying closely related:

> "Many of these single acts may be relatively common in the workplace (Leymann, 1996) and, when occurring in isolation may be seen as signs of uncivil behaviour …When persistently directed towards the same individual(s) over a longer period of time, they may turn into an extreme

[30] Distinctions based on intention are inherently implausible because (i) it is difficult to measure via targets' survey responses (ii) it is difficult to argue the presence or absence of intention when the behaviour used to assess ostracism can be both intentional and 'absent minded', and (iii) the outcome of excluding and isolating behaviours – regardless of intention - is acknowledged as negatively impacting the target.

> source of social stress (Zapf, 1999), [with the] capability of causing severe harm" (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 25).

Similarly, Cortina et al. envisage that the accumulation of low-level incivility leads to a "tipping point" that triggers retaliatory aggression, and can impair psychosomatic well-being (Cortina et al., 2001, p. 65). Ferris et al. argue that recurring ostracising behaviours can lead to heightened anxiety and impaired logical reasoning (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1349).

The operationalisation of the four constructs do not include direct measures of intensity or direct measures of harm arising from the scale behaviours. Harm is inferred from the positive correlation between behavioural scale scores and more generalised measures of impact.

The shortcoming of this operationalisation of harm is that rare, high impact behaviours are 'averaged out' of existence and of importance without being addressed either practically or theoretically. For example, *Being ordered to do work below your level of competence* (a NAQ-R item) may happen once, but can have an ongoing impact to the subsequent daily work and possibly the career of the staff member. The recurrent impact of this type of behaviour is not reflected in the measures, such as being weighted to have more impact than other behaviours. Ideally, a general construct of interpersonal mistreatment would address the role these less frequent high consequence behaviours have both theoretically and operationally in the experience of interpersonal mistreatment.

The above points on measurement and harm highlight the way in which the constructs, abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism, have become equated with their measures – the Abusive supervision scale, the NAQ-R, the WIS, and the WOS respectively. Furthermore, while the measures have the advantage of being reliable validated scales, they have the disadvantage of not being causally linked to the measures of harm that are attributed to them. The variables are correlated, meaning that a third stressor may be the cause of both, say, the experience of ostracism and the sense of ill health. For example, there is strong evidence from the work of Lim and Cortina (2005) that incivility co-occurs with sexual harassment. At least two thirds of those experiencing incivility in their study of law court employees also experienced sexual harassment. Is the harm experienced by these workers primarily from incivility, sexual harassment or both? Does it matter which type of behaviour is experienced, so that the mere recurrence of any interpersonal mistreatment is driving negative impact, rather than one construct or another? Building from this line of enquiry, any co-occurrence of behaviours that are not measured will intensify the apparent

impact of the construct that is measured. That is, unmeasured experiences will have an intensifying effect on the measures used to validate individual constructs.

Shared nomological net

A nomological net is a conceptual network that identifies the key constructs associated with a phenomenon of interest and the associations between the phenomenon and those constructs. Construct validity is claimed when the proposed scale variable has good psychometric properties and when it is shown to relate to other known constructs or variables in a predicted way. The aim of this process is to demonstrate that the construct is reliable and valid with predicable relationships between the new measure and hypothesised antecedent and consequent variables.[31]

The four papers in this study utilised this process of testing predicted relationships to validate the constructs. For example, Tepper measured subordinates' voluntary turnover, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organizational commitment, conflict between work and family, and psychological distress. Subordinates who scored higher on the abusive supervision scale also reported significantly lower job satisfaction, lower life satisfaction, greater continuance commitment, lower normative commitment, lower affective commitment, greater work-to-family conflict, greater family-to-work conflict, greater depression, greater anxiety, and greater emotional exhaustion (Tepper, p. 183). In this example the nomological net describes the relationships between the construct, abusive supervision and consequent variables. Demonstrated in this fashion, the proposed new construct is established by its relationship to other constructs that have been operationalised and established by prior research.

Through this process the authors demonstrated a high level of reliability for the behavioural scale (through factor analyses) and validated their respective constructs through demonstrating the predicted relationships of an identified nomological net. The following measures were used to demonstrate that abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism and workplace bullying behaved in predictable ways. The constructs were positively associated with:

[31] From American Psychological Association's Dictionary of Psychology 2018, https://dictionary.apa.org/nomological-network , accessed 24/05/2024.

- exit behaviours, including job search behaviours, intention to leave, and job withdrawal
- negative health effects, including depression, psychological distress, anxiety or illness
- poor organisational behaviour, for example measured by deviant organisational behaviours, stress from relationships with colleagues, and
- For the WOS and WIS, an association with other interpersonal mistreatment constructs. The WOS was positively associated with social undermining, and the WIS was positively associated with sexual harassment.

The constructs were negatively associated with:

- desired organisational behaviours, such as self-rated work performance, satisfaction with pay or benefits, job or work satisfaction, and
- perceptions of interpersonal fairness, such as such as interpersonal justice, and perceived organisational support.

The authors were following respected positivist procedure – proposing hypotheses and testing to see if these hypotheses held true for their collected data. Table 6 provides detail of the nomological net used to validate the four types of interpersonal mistreatment, including the specific measures.

Table 6. Shared nomological net for abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and workplace ostracism

Nomological net element	AbSup	NAQ-R	WIS	WOS	
	Correlation coefficient				P value
Exit behaviours					
Positively associated with job search behaviours (WOS)				.47	p <.01
Positively associated with intention to leave (Abusive Supervision[32], NAQ-R, WOS)	ß=-.37	.36		.44	p <.01
Positively associated with job withdrawal (WIS)			.31		p <.01
Health effects					
Positively associated with depression (Abusive Supervision, WOS)	.18			.37	p <.01
Positively associated with emotional exhaustion (Abusive Supervision), GHQ-12 (NAQ-R), psychological distress (WIS), anxiety (WOS)	.36	.43	.40	.26	p <.01
Positively associated with psycho-somatic complaints (NAQ-R)		.41			p <.01
Positively associated with anxiety (Abusive Supervision)	.21	.41			p <.01
Positively associated with sickness / absenteeism (NAQ-R)		.13			p <.01
Organisational behaviour effects					
Positively associated with deviant interpersonal behaviours (WOS)				.62 & .50	p <.01
Positively associated with deviant organisational behaviours, organisational (WOS)				.61 & .28	p <.01
Negatively associated with organisational climate (NAQ-R)		-.53			p <.01
Negatively associated with pay/benefits satisfaction (WIS, NAQ-R, WOS)		-.48	-.18	-.34	p <.01
Negatively associated with job satisfaction (Abusive Supervision, WOS) organisational satisfaction (NAQ-R) work satisfaction (WIS)	-.35	-.48	-.22	-.34	p <.01
Negatively associated with affective commitment (Abusive Supervision, WOS) organisational commitment (NAQ-R)	-.21	-.35	-.14	-.24	p <.01
Positively associated with continuance commitment[33] (Abusive Supervision)	.14				p <.01

[32] A test of the main effects for abusive supervision indicated that abusive supervision and perceived mobility were related to voluntary turnover. The signs on the standardized coefficients (ß = -.37 abusive supervision, and ß = -.22 perceived mobility) suggest subordinates were more likely to quit when their supervisors were more abusive and when they had more mobility (Tepper, 2000, p. 184).

[33] *Continuance commitment* is a commitment to the job for practical reasons, such as financial reasons.

Nomological net element	AbSup	NAQ-R	WIS	WOS	
Negatively associated with normative commitment (Abusive Supervision)	-.27				p <.01
Negatively associated with procedural justice and distributive justice (Abusive Supervision)	-.48 & -.39				p <.01
Negatively associated with Group cohesion (WOS)				-.53	p <.01
Negatively associated with self-rated work performance (NAQ-R)		-.22			p <.01
Negatively associated with organisational citizenship, OCBI & OCBO[34] (WOS)				ns & -.30	p <.01
Negatively associated with organisational citizenship behaviour norms (WOS)				-.63	p <.01
Negatively associated with in role behaviour[35] (WOS)				-.26	p <.01
Perceptions of interpersonal fairness					
Negatively associated with interpersonal justice (Abusive supervision, WOS), promotional satisfaction (WIS)	-.53		-.26	-.62	p <.01
Negatively associated with perceived organisational support (WOS)				-.39	p <.01
Positively associated with stress from relationships with colleagues (NAQ-R), negatively associated with coworker satisfaction (WIS)		.61	-.34		p <.01
Negatively associated with LMX[36] (WOS), supervisor satisfaction (WIS)			-.43	-.43	p <.01
Positively associated with Autocratic leadership (NAQ-R)		.52			p <.01
Positively associated with Laissez faire leadership (NAQ-R)		.45			p <.01
Positively associated with workload (NAQ-R)		.41			p <.01
Positively associated with other interpersonal mistreatment constructs					
WOS was correlated with Social undermining (having removed the ostracism item) WIS co-occurred with sexual harassment for 2/3 respondents	Not assessed	Not assessed	Yes	.56	p <.01

[34] *OCB* or organizational citizenship behaviours are norms that reflect guidelines for the performance of behaviors that enhance the social environment in which employees work, e.g., "Members of my group advocate the importance of helping fellow coworkers" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1355). Ferris et al., measured OCB-I (individual respondents self assessment), and OCB-O (respondents view of their team and colleagues) separately. The relationship between the WOS and OCB-I was not significant. The relationship between the WOS and OCB-O was negative.

[35] In-role behaviours are work-related duties and responsibilities that are usually contained within a formal job description but are somewhat discretionary.

[36] Leader-member exchange (LMX) is the quality of the exchange relationship between leader and subordinate.

All four constructs in this study predicted similar relationships between similar outcome variables (summarised in Table 6). While the exact measures may vary, the underlying themes and logic in the nomological net remain constant. If all four separate constructs invoke and meet highly similar nomological nets, then the process to demonstrate construct validity also demonstrates their similarity to each other. The tests do not identify the constructs as distinct to each other.

These findings illustrate that construct validity is valuable to establish that a construct of interpersonal mistreatment fits a mistreatment pattern, but it does not prove that a construct is distinct to other interpersonal mistreatment constructs when they share the same relationships. This in turn supports the proposition that abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism and workplace bullying are not particularly distinct to each other and that there is an underlying construct common to all of them.

Physicality of interpersonal behaviour is under-theorised

The overt physicality of all behaviour is not integrated into theorising about interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. For example, the definition of abusive supervision specifically excludes physical contact and simultaneously is defined by the 'display' of the hostile behaviours – a concept where non-verbal physical behaviour is a prerequisite. Clearly any type of inappropriate touching would also add to the experience of abusive supervision, not create a new type of interpersonal mistreatment.

Of the four constructs, only workplace bullying included physical contact in its behavioural scale. Abusive supervision and incivility specifically exclude physical violence. Ferris et al.'s operationalisation of ostracism does not explicitly exclude physical violence, but also does not include physical contact behaviours. In contrast, the definition of workplace bullying extends to physical violence and violent behaviour is included in the NAQ-R via two items: *Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way* and *Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse*.

> "Although primarily concerned with negative behaviour of a psychological nature, studies involving targets of bullying have revealed that physically intimidating acts, and in some cases even physical violence or the threat of violence, form part of a wider repertoire of aggressive acts applied in bullying cases" (Einarsen et al. 2009, p.26).

While this is an apparent point of difference, Einarsen et al. argue that workplace bullying is primarily psychological in nature rather physical in nature. Such an emphasis is in keeping with the other constructs in this study.

The construct of ostracism by Ferris et al. appears to conflate non-verbal behaviour and non-interaction with the target. Ferris et al. argue that direct interaction with the target is 'antithetical' to ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1350). With their reasoning, only non-verbal communication can be used to convey the message of ignoring and exclusion. In effect what Ferris et al. argue is there should be no verbal communication between protagonist and target. In the WOS scale these behaviours include avoiding the target, averting the gaze, and refusing to answer, and group shunning behaviours such as *You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom* (an item from the WOS scale). In fact, aggression displayed as non-verbal behaviours – such as pushing past a person, or blocking them from a space such as an elevator – fall within Ferris et al.'s definition of ostracism as long as there is no verbal interaction.

Among the four papers in this study, it appears the authors conflate physical aggression, intimidation and physical contact. Consequently 'physical' and 'psychological' appear to be mutually exclusive. It may also be a shared assumption that physical contact is more aggressive and harmful than behaviours without physical contact. Furthermore, non-contact forms of physicality are central to the four constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. For example, behaviours such as physical crowding (*Invades my personal privacy,* an Abusive supervision item), outbursts of temper such as shouting (*Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger*, a NAQ-R item), or physical avoidance (*Others left the area when you entered*, WOS item; *Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie*, a WIS item) are all physical behaviours that stop short of physical contact with the target. Nonetheless an aggressive message is conveyed primarily through non-verbal means.

Theorists need to account for the physicality of enacted workplace aggression. Elements of the physical expression of their construct need to be identified and explicitly included in the operationalisations, such types of physical contact, physical intimidation without contact, sexualised behaviours, physical expression via an object or third party (such as stealing or destruction of an object), and other non-verbal aspects of behaviour. Furthermore, if certain non-verbal expressions are out of scope or immaterial to the construct, then the measures must reflect this and theorists much justify why that boundary is called into being.

Reductionism

The challenge of generating a measure for use in self-report survey methodology is to produce a valid, reliable, and simple way to assess the existence of a concept while maintaining fidelity with the theory of the concept, or in this case its definition. Whether that 'something' is an intrapsychic phenomenon such as depression, or an inter-personal phenomenon such as bullying, the challenge is to keep fidelity with a complex phenomenon while operationalising it so that it can be assessed via a self-report survey. That is, the measure needs to align with and reflect the definition. Any necessary simplification needs to be accounted for and - if at all possible - there needs to be an assessment of the impact the simplification has on the measure. For example, for a phenomenon such as interpersonal mistreatment there are multiple valid points of view to assess what is and is not mistreatment. In an organisational setting we have the instigator, the target, the organisation, bystanders, and the researchers' perspective which all have different criteria of whether an interaction is mistreatment, and these perspectives have varying influence on the research. When one or more perspectives are out of scope, the measure reflects only part of the phenomenon.

An issue in the four papers is that the definitions of an interpersonal phenomenon are operationalised from the researchers' point of view through the vehicle of behavioural items believed to represent the construct. The process of reductionism this entails is not reflected upon in these papers. I consider the operationalisation of Abusive supervision and Ostracism to illustrate this argument.

Abusive supervision

Abusive supervision is defined as the subordinates' perspective of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours. The concept of a 'sustained display' is operationalised by the number of behaviours experienced and behaviour recurrence data. In practice this is the sum of all the behaviours data. Tepper does not discuss a behavioural threshold to determined what is 'sustained' and therefore abusive supervision. It is possible that no threshold was used at all, and one experience of any item in the scale was accepted as that respondent being subject to abusive supervision. However, the participant's conceptualisation of their experiences is not sought in the research. Consequently, the experience of abusive supervision is measured through a short list of remembered behaviours, operationalised by the researcher.

Ostracism

Ostracism is similar to abusive supervision in that it is characterised as a subjective assessment from the targets' point of view with regard to feeling ostracised. The broad concept of ostracism is operationalised as excluding behaviours that are passive aggressive. A by-product of this focus is that the authors ignored the vast array of behaviours that can be ostracising. The statistical processes involved in scale constructions and concept validation (factor analyses and testing relationships against the identified nomological net) provide a sense of accuracy and validity to the new construct, thereby encouraging the reader to ignore alternative conceptualisations and operationalisations of ostracism. At each point the construct appears more factual, but the result is a set of behavioural items that stand for the definition, which itself is only a partial rendering of the experience of ostracism.

Considering the four constructs in this analysis, a construct definition is operationalised using nominated behaviours and excluding non-behavioural elements. The researchers' point of view is prioritised. The targets' point of view, while acknowledged in definitions, discussions or both, is absent in the operationalisation. The process of describing and labelling the participants' behavioural experiences is conducted by the researcher, based on the researchers' assessment of their data and the researchers' assessment of what experiential threshold constitutes abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism, or workplace bullying. In this way, the multi-perspective interpersonal phenomena conceptualised in the definitions are reduced to data about a limited set of behavioural items which are interpreted by researchers. Regardless of definitions or discussion, the constructs are reduced to that which is measured, the behavioural scale items.

Why is this important? For these four constructs, the impact of simplifying the construct to a finite list of behaviours has not been assessed. Utility and psychometric rigour obscure the limitations of the measures themselves to express a unique construct of interpersonal mistreatment. This raises some key theoretical questions;

- Are behaviours an oversimplification of a complex interpersonal phenomenon, or are they sufficient as an applied tool that indicates mistreatment, or both?
- Can these designated behavioural items demonstrate the validity of the construct, rather than self referentially validate a construct?
- How can self-report survey methodology engage with the basic characteristic of interpersonal mistreatment – that it is interpersonal?

Interpersonal mistreatment researchers need to embrace inter-personal-ness. That is, interpersonal mistreatment is interpersonal and subjective, only partially observable by others. There is no objective viewpoint to be measured. The challenge then, is how to include multiple perspectives in self-report survey methodology and to embrace (that is, actually use) methodologies and research designs that engage with multiple points of view, or perhaps put a limitation warning on the use of current scales about their singular view point.

Evolving constructs

There is evidence that constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace are still evolving as they take into account new research and critiques in the literature. These evolutions also demonstrate the overlap between postulated constructs. For instance, in later work Tepper acknowledges that abusive supervision is like workplace bullying, with the exception that abusive supervision is focused on the supervisor as the protagonist (Tepper, 2007, p. 267).

Einarsen and colleagues have simplified the definition of bullying over time. Three qualities – intention, power imbalance, and organisational impact – were excluded in this papers' definition of bullying (Einarsen et al., 2009) compared to earlier work (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen et al., 2003, pp. 10, 12). In Einarsen et al. (2009) these attributes were discussed as hallmarks of bullying but not included in the definition. It appears that the definition of bullying is still provisional and may be subject to change. Of note is that the changes to the definition bring it more into line with what a self-report survey can measure. This is an intriguing thought, that the definition is refined based on the methodology rather than on a refinement of the theoretical basis of the construct itself.

6.5 Discussion and Implications of Study 1 findings

Tactics - useful theoretical tool

Other researchers have noted that behaviours can be enacted in different ways and that this is important for the study of interpersonal mistreatment.

> "Cutting across all constructs are other ways to classify aggressive behaviours in the workplace: direct (overt) and indirect (or covert) aggression, distal and proximal, perpetrator or target perspective" (Hershcovis & Reich, 2013, p. 31).

I concur with Hershcovis and Reich that the behavioural items are highly malleable. Study 1 identified seven ways that behaviours can be enacted; direct or indirect, overt or covert, involving third parties, ridicule, manipulation, denigration, and exclusion. I call them *tactics* because the way a behaviour is enacted can modify, conceal or intensify the behaviour. The way the behaviour is enacted combined with the context of the workplace and the history between the instigator and target, layer meaning onto the behavioural items. In this way behaviours can 'fit' many different scenarios and many different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Consequently, a single behavioural item can validly contribute to abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism and workplace bullying.

There are other tactics that may be added to the list – Hershcovis and Reich's distal or proximal may be one. Electronic behaviours could be another. What happens if we consider sexualised behaviour as a tactic rather than a separate literature? Behavioural tactics can provide a basis to relate the sexual harassment and interpersonal mistreatment literatures. These and other questions about behavioural tactics open up new opportunities for theorisation and provide a conceptual language to explore the similarities of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Implications of shared characteristics

The authors of the papers in this study acknowledge a large degree of overlap with other constructs (Cortina et al., 2001; Einarsen et al., 2009; Ferris et al., 2008; Tepper, 2000), yet also argue strongly for the distinctiveness of the construct they put forward. Their arguments rest on the assertion that each construct captures something unique and theoretically vital that is not present in other constructs.

However, the findings of the document analysis show little evidence of conceptually different constructs between abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility or ostracism. Rather, the latent thematic analysis illustrates that a focus on difference has resulted in an under appreciation of the shared conceptual space between constructs, encouraging us to seek a

common thread or substrata to the constructs to account for the shared behavioural and conceptual characteristics.

For example, intention may be an intensifying factor but does not differentiate between constructs. The correlation between the experience of behaviour items and measures of individual or organisational harm indicate a common basis of experienced stress in accordance with conservation of resources theory, not distinct constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. The establishment of a power differential and abuse of power are central to the four constructs of mistreatment, not a distinct feature of one. In fact, the differences that the authors lean into; abusive supervision's specificity of role, bullying being recurring, incivility involving ambiguous intent, or ostracism being excluding and ignoring behaviours, are matters of emphasis rather than unique or identifying characteristics of the constructs.

Furthermore, under theorisation within the papers is also a point of commonality. The physicality of behaviour is not really investigated. The interpersonal nature of the constructs is not critically considered or actively included in the measures. For example, the legitimacy of multiple points of view is not engaged with at all. Perhaps because of this the authors do not acknowledge the inherent reductionism in the development of measurement scale items. There is a shared assumption that the existence of harm indicates the interpersonal mistreatment construct. Theoretical alternatives are not engaged with, such as what does failed interpersonal mistreatment look like? In addition, there is an implication that the measures of harm validate a unique construct. However and as discussed above, the nomological net used to validate the constructs is shared.

In summary, the findings indicate the existence of a base construct of interpersonal mistreatment. Abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and workplace ostracism could be seen as differences in emphasis, but not as distinct constructs to each other.

Definitions as barriers

The overall approach of defining, operationalising, and measuring the existence of different constructs has dominated the first 30 years of interpersonal mistreatment research. Have we come to the end of the usefulness of this approach?

One account of the process of scientific development is that there is a breakthrough that happens suddenly, even by accident, followed by a long period of incremental refinement and change. Latour and Woolgar investigated the social construction of knowledge through an ethnographical study (Latour & Woolgar, 1979). They observed a science laboratory over the course of two years in order to investigate how scientists made sense of the world.

> Despite participants' well-ordered reconstructions and rationalisations, actual scientific practice entails the confrontation and negotiation of utter confusion. The solution adopted by scientists is the imposition of various frameworks by which the extent of background noise can be reduced and against which an apparently coherent signal can be presented (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, pp. 36-37).

Latour and Woolgar described a process by which these frameworks became embodied in scientific apparatus, which in turn became 'reified theory' and the work of using apparatus and following set procedures were described as 'material theories and practices' and 'craft work' (Latour & Woolgar, 1979, pp. 66, 68, 69). Combined, these tools and procedures become unquestioned, and in this way also become conceptual boundaries around the object of study.

Relating this to abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism, and workplace bullying research, the definition is the artefact and the measurement tool and statistical validation processes become the material theories and practices. Over time the definition, measures and processes have become objects that are adopted as a priori fact and without further inquiry. The definitions as the primary mode of conceptualising the object of study, and the consequent survey tools used to demonstrate the definition's 'existence' are scientific objects. This has a lot of practical value, which further entrenches the reification. Both definitions and measurement scales have high face validity. They are based on initial 'common sense' understandings and consequently easy to accept. For example, everyone has a concept of what a bully is, and the application of research forms and processes give that common sense understanding greater weight. Furthermore, the behavioural scales are easily integrated into organisational practice and provide statistics for decision makers. These two elements, face validity and ease of use, serve to entrench the objectification of definitions and measures. The situation is what Danziger describes as a methodological circle, where 'methods based on assumptions about the nature of the subject matter only produce observations which must confirm these assumptions" (Danziger, 1985, p. 1).

When considered with the issue of reductionism evident in these findings, the implication is that defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment and their behavioural measures can be seen as barriers - rather than an aides - to new insights and theorisation in the field. One way forward is to more critically engage with theory to test the theoretical validity of the currently defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Considering this in the light of COR theory, interpersonal mistreatment is reasonably considered to be a source of stress (Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Potter et al., 2016; Tepper et al., 2017) which makes it and COR theory a good fit. In addition, the shared nomological net identified in this study support the assertion that these constructs are fundamentally similar which is also in keeping with COR theory which places emphasis on the combined effect of stressors that cumulatively deplete a targets' resources. COR theory challenges interpersonal mistreatment researchers to articulate what is unique about the stress accumulated from any one construct, or indeed interpersonal mistreatment as a whole.

Ostracism – the way forward or a poorly conceived construct?

As touched upon previously, the construct ostracism seems to be too narrowly defined to represent the idea of ostracism. Ferris et al. drew a distinction between direct acts of mistreatment such as bullying, and indirect acts of mistreatment. Direct acts of mistreatment "allow the target to feel acknowledged by the source" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1350) so that targets are identified and verified albeit in a negative way. Ostracism, according to Ferris et al., does not acknowledge the target in any way. In effect their conceptualisation of ostracism is an articulation of a single tactic – behaviours that ignore the target. As such it is a valuable measurement tool to identify ignoring and excluding behaviours in the organisational setting. It is arguable whether this reflects the complexity of ostracism.

Ferris et al.'s conceptualisation appears to conflate excluding and ignoring behaviours with the end state of being ostracised. If social exclusion is the end state, then any behaviours that lead to social exclusion are also ostracising behaviours. Behaviours using other tactics can also ostracise the target. For example, *Ridicules me* (an Abusive Supervision item), *spreading gossip and rumours about you* (NAQ-R), or *Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you* (WIS) can all effectively isolate the target even though they are active, verbalised, and more direct to the target.

In the organisational setting, physical expulsion from the community could be the staff member quitting or moving to a different section due to being targeted with interpersonal mistreatment. In this study the four constructs are strongly related with outcomes aligned with ostracism such as absenteeism, loss of organisational commitment, employee turnover and employee turnover intentions. It is more reflective of the data presented in these papers to consider ostracism as an outcome of interpersonal mistreatment rather than a separate construct.

Which leads to the conclusion that Ferris et al.' operationalisation of workplace ostracism conflates specific behavioural tactics with a broader construct of interpersonal mistreatment. That is, the feeling of being ostracised – which is the definitional criteria - can be invoked by a wider range of behaviours than those in the WOS.

Nonetheless, the WOS *as a measure* closely reflects Ferris et al.s' definition that "ostracism is the extent to which an individual perceives that he or she is ignored or excluded by others". Unlike the measures constructed for the abusive supervision, workplace bullying and incivility, this definition does not rely on non-behavioural attributes. That is, the WOS is a valid measure of ignoring and passive exclusion. Similarly, grouping behavioural items by their predominant tactics provide an alternative way to conceptualise different aspects of interpersonal mistreatment without engaging with the non-behavioural attributes evident in construct definitions which are very problematic to operationalise.

6.6 Limitations of Study 1

This study takes a fresh look at definitions and measures of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace, at how we construct our constructs. However, I limited the results presented here to three major themes: behavioural tactics, definitions with porous boundaries, and the shared nomological net.

I have not presented a range of minor themes from the latent thematic analysis. These themes include technical matters that have been articulated by others (see for example Escartín et al., 2021; Fahie & McGillicuddy, 2021; Notelaers & Van der Heijden, 2021). While the results of this paper support Hershovis' assessment of methodological shortcomings, (Hershcovis & Reich, 2013), the focus is less on technical matters and more on the conceptualisation of the construct embedded in the operationalisation process.

Other observations (such as moralistic assumptions by the authors, and a need to reconcile a fundamentally intra-psychic methodology applied to a relational phenomena) were under developed and divergent to the main themes presented here. However, they could be a fruitful direction for other studies.

This exploratory qualitative work was conducted by a single researcher as part of her PhD program. As such other researchers may well undertake a similar analysis, make different observations and arrive at different conclusions. Further research is needed to assess the generalisability of these findings.

6.7 Summary of latent thematic analysis findings

This study was a latent thematic document analysis of four seminal papers of interpersonal mistreatment; abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, and workplace ostracism. The aim of the study was to explore what is similar between them and I fully expected to confirm points of distinction. The findings demonstrate broad areas of commonality rather than distinct constructs. An unexpected finding was that individual behaviour items can be enacted in multiple ways, here described as behavioural tactics, and that these behavioural tactics could provide an alternate basis for identifying groups of behaviours that is independent to construct definitions.

Behavioural tactics

The analysis of behavioural items used to operationalise abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism and workplace bullying revealed an array of seven tactics that make behaviours malleable to many situations and constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. These tactics were evident across the four constructs. They were direct or indirect enactment, covert or overt enactment, involving third parties, the use of ‘joking’ sarcasm or ridicule, manipulation, denigration, and exclusion.

A tactic is a way that a behaviour can be enacted as opposed to the behavioural item itself. Some behaviours are more likely to be enacted one way rather than another. In that way they share a tactic, which makes them the same ‘type’ of behaviour such as ‘excluding’ behaviours. Also, a single behaviour can be varied and nuanced through the application of

combinations of tactics. So much so that a single behaviour can readily measure different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, depending on how it is enacted. Moreover, some tactics indicate an escalation of workplace aggression such as involving others and behaving overtly rather than covertly. From a theoretical point of view, tactics provide an alternative conceptual framework to theorise interpersonal mistreatment that is separate to the definitional approach. In particular behavioural tactics can provide the bridge between different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

There are other tactics beyond the seven identified in this study. For example, structural replicability. This is where the target lives with the impact of the behaviour each day but the instigator 'moves on'. For example; moving someone to an isolated desk, demotion, or removing work responsibility. Cyber bullying shares this characteristic, in that one post by the protagonist can exist and be replicated long after the protagonist has posted it. Another tactic is sexualised behaviours, including use of diminutives, sexualised stares, comments or touching.

A shared underlying construct

There is little evidence of conceptually different constructs in the measures of abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism, or workplace bullying. Rather, the results indicate a shared substrata to the constructs. The substrata accounts for the shared behavioural content, shared tactics, common theoretical elements of power differences, cumulative harm, ambiguous intent to harm, and shared nomological net.

This analysis identified many points of inter-relationship. At the conceptual level:

- Abusive supervision is a subset of workplace bullying based on formal power.
- Ostracism is focused on isolating tactics, specifically exclusion and ignoring behaviours, at the exclusion of other behaviours that can also ostracise the target. The other three constructs include ostracism.
- Incivility is amorphous and indistinguishable from the other constructs, which all share uncivil and rude behaviours and are made more impactful through recurrence.

Additionally, key elements of the definitions were not validated either logically or empirically. Furthermore, the method for validating the individual constructs in this study did not evaluate

their relationship to other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. It is premature to claim the constructs are qualitatively distinct to each other.

In summary, the construct definitions provide a focus and boundary for research purposes. However, they fall short of identifying constructs that are operationally or theoretically distinct to each other. That is, the definitions function descriptively, rather than definitively. The construct definitions, discussions and operationalisations point more towards a foundational or base substrata that is shared across constructs.

What might a foundational construct look like?

The inter-relatedness of the constructs further supports the need for a clearly theorised foundation construct to account for these relationships. If we consider what the four constructs had in common, then the elements of interpersonal mistreatment would include a misuse or abuse of power as a central element. In contrast, the intention of the instigator is poorly theorised. It may be an intensifying attribute of interpersonal mistreatment, but not necessarily an attribute that distinguishes one construct from another.

Other elements are notable for not being engaged with within the four papers, that is, they are identified by their absence. These elements include; the purpose or function of interpersonal mistreatment in human interaction, a complete range of behavioural tactics, how defined constructs could co-occur, and an examination of the problematic assumption that harm proves the existence of the mistreatment.

Lastly, a base construct of interpersonal mistreatment needs to actively theorise the interpersonal and emergent nature of interpersonal mistreatment. This would engage meta theories such as social identity theory to extrapolate how interpersonal mistreatment functions at the individual, group and social level.

Abuse of power

The abuse of the instigators' power within the instigator-target relationship is a key attribute of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Mistreatment arises from the use of power to establish or reiterate personal advantage through devaluing another. This is at the heart of the sense of powerlessness that targets feel in the face of mistreatment. The instigators power can be derived from a formal role, social position or personal attributes. Three of the constructs in this study allowed for the accrual of power to the protagonist through multiple

behaviours that demoralise and disempower the targets. Within organisations, covert or insidious forms of workplace aggression can be seen as more effective than overt displays of power as the misconduct can be perpetrated without detection.

Re-examine truisms

> "In the absence of normative theoretical background and explicit moral criteria, scholars have relied on either implicit theories of morality or on employees' perceptions of unethical supervision (e.g., Ashforth 1994; Duffy et al. 2002; Tepper 2000)" (Ünal et al., 2012, p. 9).

Theorising a foundational construct is an opportunity to re-examine assumed normative thinking around what interpersonal mistreatment is and how we determine that it is experienced.

Distinguish between challenging behaviour and interpersonal mistreatment
Currently we don't have a functional and theoretical distinction between unwelcome behaviours and enacting interpersonal mistreatment. What qualities and circumstances make a behaviour 'mistreatment' rather than challenging but not mistreatment? I would argue that undermining and belittling use of power is central, but is this sufficient to make a distinction between challenging behaviour and interpersonal mistreatment? Currently, a challenging behaviour can be recorded using behavioural measures as mistreatment. Theorising the underlying construct would address this issue so that the boundaries of individual constructs can also be clearly identified.

Failed mistreatment - moving beyond harm as evidence
Accepted practice in these studies is to use harm as an indicator that the construct for interpersonal mistreatment was experienced. This raises questions about attempted interpersonal mistreatment – mistreatment that did not incur harm to the target. Does the resilience of the target, or the ineptitude of the instigator, mean that interpersonal mistreatment did not happen? Is there such a thing as 'attempted' interpersonal mistreatment? Is it possible to cause the same harm *without* it being a case of interpersonal mistreatment? Can an observer identify mistreatment if the protagonist and/or target do not? Given that the effects of interpersonal mistreatment are cumulative over time, when does an attempt, say of ostracism, fail? Questions such as these can be asked of the underlying construct of interpersonal mistreatment and the answers will be applicable to all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Purpose or function of interpersonal mistreatment in human interaction

Theorising about mistreatment needs to engage with the point of view of the protagonist and consider that interpersonal mistreatment may bring benefits to the protagonist. Ferris et al. note that ostracism is a "universal experience, with most individuals either having ostracized others or having been ostracized themselves" (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1348). They observe that ostracism occurs with children in the playground, among other social primates, and within adult relationships (such as giving someone the silent treatment). Ostracism is a powerful way to express our disfavour either as an individual or as part of a group. Of course, there are other ways to express disfavour and expressing disfavour or punishment could also be a reason behind abusive supervision, workplace bullying or incivility.

Volk et al. (2014) argue that bullying is goal directed behaviour rather than intentional harm toward others per se. They cast bullying as a rational assessment of costs and benefits for the bully to gain status, resources, or reproductive rights (Volk et al., 2014, pp. 329-331). Extrapolating from this, a foundational construct of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace needs to articulate how mistreatment benefits the instigator and so provides positive reinforcement for him or her to continue. This has direct implications for how we design and evaluate interventions. If we want to change a culture of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace, then the positive reinforcement to the instigator that pre-exist in the organisational culture needs to be acknowledged and dismantled. Engaging closely with a meta theory such as SIT/SCT would support this work.

Taxonomy of behavioural tactics

An underlying construct of interpersonal mistreatment needs to encompass the broad array of tactics evident in the different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, identifying tactics that are generally shared and tactics that are specific to one type of interpersonal mistreatment.

Behavioural tactics may be a useful and practical rubric to articulate interpersonal mistreatment with different characteristics. Tactics, the way behaviours are enacted, allow for conceptual groupings independent to the defined constructs that currently exist. They provide a way to simplify construct proliferation by asking – which tactics only apply to this construct? For example, electronic bullying can be identified by one tactic – enactment through an electronic device. Therefore, this may be a useful distinction for this construct from the current array of interpersonal mistreatment constructs.

Co-occurrence of multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment

A survey participant may be the focus of multiple types of interpersonal mistreatment. Different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment can be experienced simultaneously, intermittently, or in rapid succession. The papers in Study 1 do not reflect this. If we researchers ignore co-occurrence and only present one measure for one construct of interpersonal mistreatment at a time, then we are doing our participants a disservice. When we assume our survey participants can and will ignore their 'out of scope' experiences then we place a cognitive burden on them and simultaneously send a message that these other experiences of interpersonal mistreatment are not important. Further, we have no way to assess halo effects – where participants do not do the cognitive work demanded of them and use the survey to record the experience of any construct of interpersonal mistreatment – resulting in false positives for the single construct measure. Furthermore, by ignoring co-occurrence we are limiting our knowledge of interpersonal mistreatment.

Articulating the common features of all interpersonal mistreatment lays the foundation for identifying substantive differences between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Even if the scope of a research study is focused on a single defined construct, the research design should acknowledge and assess the co-occurrence between it and the underlying or foundational construct of interpersonal mistreatment.

7 Cluster analysis to investigate co-occurrence of interpersonal mistreatment behaviours

The aim of this study is to investigate how and to what extent interpersonal mistreatment behaviours co-occur when the behaviour presented are not limited to a single construct.

This study has been supported by the Australian Department of Defence (Defence) which provided data from its Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS) for analysis. As a large and complex government organisation, Defence has policies and practices to prevent interpersonal mistreatment and processes to help those who are impacted by interpersonal mistreatment. The WBS is part of this wider effort. It was designed to assess the extent of multiple constructs of unacceptable behaviour evident in Defence workplaces with one survey tool for the organisation as a whole. The context of Defence and the events that contributed to the design of the WBS are provided in the text box below and in more detail in Appendix 1. In Defence, the terminology for interpersonal mistreatment is *unacceptable behaviour* and this term will be used in this chapter. Note that Defence is not the subject of this study, rather it is the context from which this data was drawn.

Risks of measuring a single type of interpersonal mistreatment

The common practice in organisational research is to assess one type of interpersonal mistreatment per research study – such as bullying, harassment, abusive supervision, cyber bullying, or sexual misconduct. However, when the focus of measurement is one construct importance is assigned to that construct simultaneously devaluing the importance of other constructs of mistreatment. From a practitioner point of view, the organisation effectively becomes blind to other constructs of mistreatment. Single construct focus risks an array of unintended consequences:

- The single measure can suffer from a halo effect, where participants represent any type of misconduct they experienced in the single measure. This can over-estimate the extent of the problem in the specific sense and over-simplify the area of concern to the organisation.
- Pre-conceived ideas about which types of interpersonal mistreatment is most important, most harmful to people and/or most harmful to the organisation are not challenged or validated.
- Interventions based on studies with singular focus may be quite literally focused on the wrong thing.
- The organisation's need to understand the breadth of unwanted conduct in their workplaces is not met.

In summary, there are knowledge gaps in our understanding of how interpersonal mistreatment is experienced in the workplace and information deficits for the applied organisational setting. This second study aims to investigate how behavioural experiences co-occur, extending our knowledge of how constructs of interpersonal mistreatment are experienced in the workplace through the lens of behavioural items.

This study draws on prior methodological reviews in the interpersonal mistreatment literature (Hershcovis & Reich, 2013; Kunkel et al., 2015; Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Nielsen, Bjørkelo, et al., 2010; Nielsen et al., 2020; Van De Griend & Messias, 2014) and the findings of Study 1 in that behavioural items are considered to potentially refer to multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, depending on how they are enacted. This study involves secondary analysis of organisational data to investigate how behaviours from disparate types of interpersonal mistreatment co-occur.

Co-occurrence of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment is under researched

There are few examples of research in the interpersonal mistreatment literature that explore the co-occurrence of different constructs. One early example is from Rogers (1998) who conducted two studies on the common set of stress reactions to interpersonal mistreatment. She found that participants made qualitative distinctions between physical, emotional and sexualised behaviours. Cortina et al. (2001) conducted a study of administrative personnel in the American court system.

Defence context

The Australian Department of Defence (Defence) has the mandate to protect Australia's interest both nationally and internationally. To do this ADF members are deployed in Australia and internationally for training exercises, to offer humanitarian assistance, and to support Australian allies in conflict zones. Defence is comprised of roughly 110,000 personnel. The majority are ADF serving members – meaning they are Navy, Army or Air Force serving members. In addition, Australian Public Service (APS) employees support the three Services in a variety of roles that do not require a trained service member to undertake them. ADF roles are highly varied and range from command roles through to all manner of occupations required to establish and maintain a force element. APS roles tend to be more office based. Defence is predominantly male, however the proportion of women ADF members is increasing, from 12.8% women in 2000 to 20.4% women in 2023.

In recent years, the ADF has been publicly brought to account about the conduct of its members, most recently the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Kaldas et al., 2024a, 2024b). These major public accountings sharpen Defence senior leaders' focus on the topic of unacceptable behaviours within the organisation and the importance of personnel wellbeing.

The reviews and critiques of Defence also highlighted the need for data about unacceptable behaviour to support effective intervention and prevention strategies. This impetus gave rise to the Workplace Behaviours Survey, which was required to be an annual survey for all Defence personnel about their experience of unacceptable behaviours, including sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying, abuse of power, unwanted sexual attention, and criminal behaviours such as sexual assault. This study draws on data from the 31 non-criminal behaviours included in the WBS.

They found that while 71% of their mostly female participants experienced incivility at work, 48% of participants also experienced sexual harassment. That is, these behaviours were experienced by the same person in their workplace during the study period. The researchers could report the co-occurrence of incivility and sexual harassment because the researchers included the two scales in their study. In later work Cortina and colleagues demonstrated that incivility is a powerful tool to discriminate against others (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013). Both of these studies illustrated the co-occurrence of incivility with other constructs, namely sexual harassment and discrimination.

Love (2012) investigated whether bullying, cyberbullying, incivility, and sexual harassment occurred on a spectrum and as separate or overlapping constructs in a study of contra-power abuse of faculty members. She entered the 50 behaviour items of the Faculty Experience Survey into factor analysis. The Survey pooled items from previously established behavioural scales (Love, 2012, p. 71). Factor analysis results indicated that the behavioural items of bullying, cyber bullying, incivility, and sexual harassment merged and overlapped into three factors: (i) poor student behaviours, (ii) direct incivility, and (iii) aggressive, threatening behaviours. Further, she noted a great deal of overlap between the factors and that these categories appear to sit on a "spectrum of interpersonal mistreatment ranging from the most common and least upsetting to the least common and most upsetting behaviors" (Love, 2012, p. 71). These studies indicate that that different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment often co-occur, and that participants may have a different basis for categorising their experiences than researchers. However, this line of research is under-developed and eclipsed by studies of singular constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Predominantly, the theoretical commitment is to a single concept such as 'bullying' or 'abusive supervision' or 'sexual harassment' or 'cyber bullying'. One barrier to researching co-occurrence is that the established method in the literature links one behavioural item with one particular construct of interpersonal mistreatment. The commitment to individual construct measures limit how researchers consider the possibility of co-occurrence between different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment and consequently limit our theorisation of co-occurrence.

This leaves many practical and theoretical questions unanswered. How do the behaviours inter-relate? How do disparate constructs of interpersonal mistreatment reinforce each other? Some suggest they might lead one to another in an escalation (Einarsen et al., 2020a, pp. 34-35), but this is an assertion. Behaviours can happen at exactly the same time, or they may be experienced in an interlayered pattern. While Anderson et al.'s (1999) spiral of incivility, and Branch's (2013) cyclical framework of workplace bullying provide a way forward to theorising the relationship between constructs and behaviours, there is very little research in this area (Cortina et al., 2017). Additionally, attributing one behaviour to one type of mistreatment rather than another is fraught, as Study 1 concluded.

Avoiding the methodological circle

Survey methodology necessarily reduces complex situations to individual data points. The decisions of what to ask, how to ask it, and how to analyse and interpret the quantified data are informed by the researchers' theoretical understanding and methodological training. Each data point is heavily codified through the survey design process.

One of the conclusions drawn from Study 1 is that the measures in the papers had developed a methodological circle (***Error! Reference source not found.*** in see **Error! Reference source not found.** for earlier discussion of this point), a situation where data collection methods are based on assumptions about the subject that in turn bias the design of the measure which in turn confirms the assumptions (Danziger, 1985). The design of the WBS attempted to circumvent the methodological circle via built in validity checks in the survey instrument and in the planned analyses. Two key processes included were to (i) include behaviours from multiple published scales, thereby avoiding a self-fulfilling assumption about what one set of behaviours measure; and (ii) include an option for participants to self-identify their experiences. Refer to Appendix 2, *Design of the workplace behaviours survey* for more detail about the design process, ANU trial, and accommodations made for the organisational context.

7.1 Study objective

In the previous study the document analysis examined similar constructs – incivility, ostracism, abusive supervision, and bullying – to identify their points of difference and similarity in conceptualisation and operationalisation. Study 1 identified constituents of similarity: shared behavioural tactics, shared definitional boundaries, and a shared nomological net.

The aim of Study 2 is to investigate how diverse types of interpersonal mistreatment relate to each other through behavioural co-occurrence using data from the Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS). The WBS was designed in response to an organisational need to assess multiple types of interpersonal mistreatment simultaneously. The WBS includes 31 non-criminal behaviours that span divergent types of interpersonal mistreatment drawn from the bullying and harassment literature, cyber bullying literature, and sexual harassment literature. WBS survey design and testing is described briefly below and in more detail in

Appendix 2. Study 2 was conducted under the ethics protocol number 144-19 of the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee.

Research questions

Two research questions guide this study. Firstly, I want to establish if the combined behavioural experiences reflect the same relationship to impact measures as their source behavioural scales do, that is that increased number of behaviours experienced is associated with increased impact. Analyses will examine the relationship between the experience of any behaviours and demographic (gender and age) and outcome measures (harm, intention to leave, psychosocial safety climate).

RQ1 – How do the behavioural experiences relate to impact measures?

The second question is to investigate the patterns of behavioural experiences revealed in the combined behavioural item data through cluster analyses. Do the patterns of experience reflect discrete constructs such as ostracism, bullying, sexual harassment or cyber bullying? Which types of interpersonal mistreatment co-occur?

RQ2 – What patterns of behavioural co-occurrence arise when not constrained to one construct?

This study draws on data from the organisation's Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS) to answer these research questions. The WBS assesses the experience of unacceptable behaviour in Defence. The concept of unacceptable behaviour is the organisation's umbrella term for all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, including cyber bullying, workplace harassment, workplace bullying, incivility, and sexual harassment.

Out of scope

One large body of work that I developed during this PhD is not included in this thesis - the design of the Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS). This work will be briefly described here and in more detail Appendix 2. However, this thesis is focused on the secondary analyses of WBS data, not on the design of the survey itself.

7.2 Methods

The WBS was designed for the needs of the Defence organisation to understand the prevalence of a variety of interpersonal mistreatment using the one survey instrument. It is based on an earlier survey that presented list of 11 definitions for different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment identified in Defence policy. In this earlier survey, each construct was assessed by a single global measure, 'Did this happen to you in the past 12 months?'. In contrast the WBS involves a series of 31 behavioural items derived from pooled behavioural scales in the published literature for workplace harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, abusive supervision, incivility, cyber bullying. An initial trial survey was administered to university students which provided proof of concept[37]. Further to the behavioural items, the WBS included six items to measure the impact of their experiences of the most serious incident. These were summed together for an overall impact score. The WBS also included eight items from the psychosocial safety climate scale (Potter et al., 2016).

The WBS was designed for the needs of the Defence organisation to understand the prevalence of a variety of interpersonal mistreatment using the one instrument. It is based on an earlier survey that presented list of 11 different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment as definitions, each assessed by a single global measure, 'Did this happen to you in the past 12 months?'. Central to the design of the WBS is a series of 31 behavioural items derived from pooled behavioural scales in the published literature for workplace harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, abusive supervision, incivility, cyber bullying. An initial trial survey was administered to university students which provided proof of concept (ANU DERC protocol number 2014/400). Further to the behavioural items, the WBS included six items to measure the impact of participants' experiences of the most serious incident. These were summed together for an overall impact score. The WBS also included eight items from the psychosocial safety climate scale (Potter et al., 2016).

[37] Australian National University Delegated Ethics Review Committee protocol number 2014/400. The DERC is the ANU HREC delegated committee to review low risk ethics research.

Survey Measures

Demographics

Demographic items were gender, age, and Service (Navy, Army, Air Force, and Australian Public Servant or APS). Age was measured in five year increments to support data anonymity. There was a concern that the combined data for gender, age, and Service in combination with reported experiences of unacceptable behaviour, could be identifying or be mis-identifying participants. The age categories were <20 years, then in five year increments to 66 years or more.

Table 7. Behavioural items from the WBS entered into cluster analysis

Behavioural items entered into analysis	
Posting humiliating, abusive or intimidating comments about you on social media	Blaming you for something
Making unwanted contact by calling, emailing, texting or messaging	Encouraging you to do something you did not want to do
Sharing or threatening to share photos, videos, personal information, or anything that's humiliating or embarrassing to you	Excessive surveillance of your behaviour (e.g., your work or study habits or social activities)
Monitoring your movements using GPS, tracking apps or spyware	Being ordered or manipulated to do personal tasks for a superior
Reminding others of your errors or mistakes	Withholding information or resources from you
Spreading gossip or rumours about you	Shouting at you
Ignoring your opinion	Invaded your personal space (e.g. standing too close, looking through your phone, looking through your desk)
Not returning your greetings	Physically blocking your way
Excluding you from an email or text conversation	Shoving, pushing or holding you
Teasing you	Staring at you in a way that made you uncomfortable
Talking to you using nicknames	Touching, hugging, or kissing you
Joking about your beliefs or background	Sexual comments or 'jokes' that made you uncomfortable
Joking about your appearance	Insults of a sexual nature
Refusing your request for help, time out, or a change of plans	Pressuring you for sex or other sexual acts
Undervaluing your efforts	Sending you sexual pictures or text messages (e.g. 'sexting')
	Taking or transmitting sexually explicit videos or photographs (in a way that made you uncomfortable)

Behavioural items

An analysis of the constructs defined in the literature was a necessary initial step before attempting to construct a generalised measure of misconduct. Previous researchers have undertaken comparative exercises regarding construct definitions (Hershcovis, 2011; Keashly & Harvey, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2005; Tepper & Henle, 2011) and most have commented on the similarity and overlap between constructs, but few have combined items from different measurement scales.

The 31 behaviours entered into cluster analysis are listed in Table 7. These were derived from 98 behaviours pooled from published scales in the literature following the first three stages for developing measurement scales by Hair, Gabriel, et al. (2019) and with reference to findings from Study 1 (see Annex 1. The Defence context for the Workplace Behaviour Survey).

Presentation of behavioural items

In the WBS survey design, was drawn from the combined behavioural items from eight published scales (AHRC, 2012; Betancourt, 2016; Cortina et al., 2001; Einarsen et al., 2009; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Francisco et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2009; Quine, 1999; Tepper, 2000) and informed by (Francisco et al., 2015; Leisring & Giumetti, 2014; Nielsen et al., 2009; Stewart et al., 2014). The items were initially reduced through a series of sort tasks to remove duplicated content. A second sort task grouped the behaviours by tactics the tactics identified in Study 1, with the addition of sexualised and electronic ways of enacting the behaviours. See Appendix 2 for detail of this process.

Some tactics identified in Study 1, were applicable to most behaviours (overt or covert behaviours, third party behaviours, and direct or indirect behaviours), making a separate group for these tacts very difficult. Instead, the behaviours within each tactic group were chosen to present a wide array of possible tactics combinations. The final groups were based on six behavioural tactics; electronic transmission, exclusion, ridicule, manipulation, physical aggression or violence (non-sexualised), and sexualised behaviours. These groups were used for block randomisation in the presentation of the behavioural items. Each block of items included at least one behaviour that could be enacted overtly, covertly, directly and indirectly. The grouped behaviours were then presented to survey participants using block randomisation.

The design of the block randomisation was tested for validity by adding a final item within each block of items: Other behaviour like these <please write in>. Analysis of the written text responses show higher than 90% consistency between the tactic illustrated in the block of items and the participants' additional behaviour experienced. The results demonstrate that grouping behaviour items by tactics was recognised meaningful to participants (see Appendix 2 for detail).

PSC Items

The concept of psychosocial safety is concerned with determinants of worker psychological health and wellbeing (Hall et al., 2010). The authors argue that psychosocial hazards at work are found not only in job design, but also in the organization and management of work, and within the social and environmental contexts of the workplace (Cox et al., in Hall et al., 2010). However dominant stress theories focus mainly on hazards at the task level. The PSC is designed to operationalise organizational factors that are antecedent to hazards at the task level. Psychosocial safety climate was measured with a nine item PSC scale adapted for Defence language and relevance from the PSC-12 (see Table 8, more detail is in Appendix 2). Psychosocial Safety Climate scale, adapted to Defence). The shorter 9 item scale retained the strong single factor structure of the PSA-12 with a Chronbach alpha of .971 and accounted for 81% of the variance within the items. The PSC score is the sum of the nine items.

Table 8. PSC items adapted for Defence

PSC scale item	Factor Loading
In my workplace, managers / supervisors act quickly to address issues that affect people's safety and mental wellbeing	0.900
Managers / supervisors here act decisively when there are concerns over someone's safety or mental wellbeing	0.902
People's psychological wellbeing is taken seriously in my workplace	0.924
Managers / supervisors here consider our safety and mental wellbeing to be as important as productivity	0.919
There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me (e.g., fatigue, bullying & harassment)	0.916
Information about workplace psychological wellbeing is brought to my attention by my manager / supervisor	0.884
My contributions to resolving health and safety concerns in my workplace are listened to	0.889
Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters	0.888
People in my workplace feel comfortable raising safety and mental wellbeing issues with managers / supervisors	0.890

Impact items

Eight individual items measured a range of negative impacts from participants' most serious incident. The impact score is the sum of six items measuring personal and work impact.[38] The items were: How did the most significant event affect you?

1. *I felt offended,
2. *I felt intimidated or unsafe,
3. *It had a negative impact on my physical health (e.g., trouble sleeping),
4. *It had a negative impact on my mental health (e.g., increased stress),
5. *It had a negative impact on my work performance,
6. *It had a negative impact on my professional relationships,
7. It made me look for another job or transfer, and
8. Do you believe the instigator intended to offend or intimidate?

The response set was a five point scale from 0 'Not at all' to 4 'Extremely'.

PCA identified a single factor accounted 68% of the variance in the first six items (for more detail see Appendix 2). However, these items did not form a scale as such. The solution for the WBS was to include a summation of the first six items as an index of harm. The items *It made me look for another job or transfer*, and *Do you believe the instigator intended to offend or intimidate?* did not load onto a single factor. The concept of instigators perceived intention and the outcome of looking for another job were not included in the impact score.

Self-label options (see data imputation & scale construction

Survey participants were asked to use a list of 17 options to describe their most serious incident. The list included items indicating no unacceptable behaviour, normal behaviour, and an 'other' item with text option to facilitate their description (see list in Table 9 above). This measure did not apply definitions to the self-labels because definitions can create barriers to the wholistic assessment that survey participants engage in when answering global measures. (See Appendix 2 for a discussion with respect to providing definitions for global measures and the barriers that definitions can create for survey participants.) Without the definitions, the self-labels capture the participants own understanding of what different types of unacceptable behaviour entail. Data from this item allows the researcher to test the

[38] Currently mistreatment is identified by the experience of a set of behaviours remembered by survey participants. Harm is imputed from the correlation between the behaviour measure and a generalised measure of harm (see Table 6 from Study 1 for examples). The direct impact of the behaviour items on survey participants is not measured. The WBS design takes a step toward closing that gap. It asked participants to identify the behaviours in their most serious incident, and then were asked about the impact of that incident on them. This is the source of data for the impact index.

convergence between participants' assessment of their experience and organisational definitions for unacceptable behaviour as operationalised in the survey. Participants were asked: "Thinking about the most serious incident, how would you label it? (select all that apply)".

Table 9. Global self-label options in the WBS

Participants were asked: Thinking about the most serious incident, how would you label it? (select all that apply)	
1. Rudeness	10. Stalking
2. Sexism	11. Bullying
3. Racism	12. Assault
4. Manipulation	13. Sexual assault
5. Discrimination	14. * Not interpersonal misconduct
6. Harassment	15. * Normal behaviour
7. Abuse of power	16. * Misunderstanding
8. Hazing	17. Other (Other text option)
9. Sexual harassment	

Note to Table: Response options with an asterisk (*) indicate that the respondent thinks of the most serious behaviours they experienced are accepted in the workplace.

Participant demographics

The WBS is electronically administered annually to a stratified random sample of organisational members and employees. Study 2 utilized data from 4,467 survey participants who experienced one or more unacceptable behaviours in the 2019 WBS. Table 10 below compares the sample demographics with the Defence population as a whole.

In the sample there are proportionally more women and more Australian Public Servants (APS) than in Defence overall. This reflects two population characteristics in Defence. Firstly, unacceptable behaviour is disproportionately experienced by women in Defence. Secondly, the more populous non-commissioned ranks (Private and Corporal equivalent ranks in the ADF) are historically less likely to answer organisational surveys. These ranks are less likely to work in an office and less likely to have ready access to computers. For example, on ship there are few computers available for personal administration and these are shared with many people. Furthermore, the bandwidth on Naval vessels is limited. Both of these conditions are barriers to survey participation. The consequence is that people who

work in an office – that is APS and more senior Officers – are over represented in the sample.

Table 10. Organisational representativeness of the behaviours data

Permanent Defence personnel SERVICES x GENDER	Sample who experienced One or more behaviours Number	%	Organisation population 2019-2020 Number	%
Navy	**778**		**15,027**	
Men	554	71.21%	11,668	77.647%
Women	212	27.25%	3,357	22.34%
*Non-binary / Unspecified	12	1.54%	2	0.01%
Army	**1086**		**29,627**	
Men	822	75.69%	25,217	85.11%
Women	246	22.65%	4,408	14.88%
Non-binary / Unspecified	18	1.66%	2	0.01%
Air Force	**987**		**14,441**	
Men	656	66.46%	10,884	75.37%
Women	292	29.58%	3,554	24.61%
Non-binary / unspecified	39	3.95%	3	0.02%
Services total	**2851**		**59,095**	
Men	2032	71.27%	47,769	80.83%
Women	750	26.31%	11,319	19.154%
Non-binary / Unspecified	69	2.42%	7	0.01%
Australian Public Service (APS)	**1615**		**17,102**	
Men	714	44.21%	9,344	54.64%
Women	836	51.76%	7,754	45.34%
Non-binary / Unspecified	65	4.02%	4	0.02%
ALL PERSONNEL	**4466**	**100.00%**	**76,197**	**100.00%**
ALL men	2746	61.49%	57,113	74.954%
ALL women	1586	35.51%	19,073	25.03%
Non-binary / Unspecified	134	3.00%	11	0.01%
ALL PERSONNEL	**4466**	**100.00%**	**76,197**	**100.00%**
All Service	2851	63.84%	59,095	77.56%
All APS	1615	36.16%	17,102	22.44%

* In the WBS sample; nine cases identified as non-binary gender, 125 cases did not specify a gender.

7.3 Cluster analyses design

Cluster analysis is used in a wide variety of research settings for data reduction and hypothesis generation (Everitt et al., 2011; Hair, Black, et al., 2019; Ketchen & Shook, 1996). Cluster analysis is a non-parametric tool that is similar to factor analysis in that it classifies similar objects together. Factor analysis uses correlation as the basis of this grouping and factor analysis is often applied to grouping variables such as scale items, often with a view to reducing the number of variables into factors. Cluster analysis (CA) is a technique to define

groups of homogeneous ‘objects’ or cases. It groups cases by the similarity of their array of data, with a view to identifying groups with similar experiences or attributes. Cluster analysis uses distance between objects as the basis of grouping. Unlike factor analyses, cluster analysis does not require a normal distribution in the data.

Within the workplace bullying literature, Notelaers and colleagues used Latent Class Analysis (LCC) to group the behaviour data from the Negative Acts Questionnaire (Notelaers et al., 2006) and Nielsen, Bjørkelo, et al. (2010) applied LCC to the behavioural data of sexual harassment from the Bergen Sexual Harassment Scale.
LCC requires a specific software, using Latent GOLD 5 (Notelaers et al., 2019, p. 65), and produces different statistical metrics to support decision making to SPSS. However, in all other ways the LCC is an analysis process that shares the same assumptions as cluster analysis; it does not rely on the assumption of normal distributions which makes it suitable for highly skewed data, and the objects to be clustered are the cases of observed data, not the variables. Using LCC Einarsen, Hoel and Notelaers identified different levels of bullying severity (2009). In 2019 they used the LCC to validate the Short Negative Acts Questionnaire (Notelaers et al., 2019).

Other interpersonal mistreatment researchers used cluster analysis, mostly within the educational literature and some within the workplace literature (Evans & Chapman, 2014; Galanaki & Papalexandris, 2013; GlasØ et al., 2007; Rogers, 1998; Vanroelen et al., 2010), but overall the cluster analysis technique is little used in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures.

For this study, cluster analysis is used to see how behavioural experiences co-occur. The analysis is conducted in SPSS and follows the process expounded by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2019, p. 221). Further considerations on the suitability of cluster analysis is provided in Appendix 3.

Hair recommended that cluster analysis is optimised using group sizes between 300 and 400 cases (Hair, Black, et al., 2019, p. 221). To achieve an optimal group size, I initially grouped the data by gender and Service attributes into sub-samples. These sub-samples reflected how Defence data is routinely sectioned in reports. However, each sub-sample of Service and gender combinations were dominated by a majority of cases with low numbers of behaviours, that is single and paired behaviour experiences). This resulted in chaining in the hierarchical analysis output rather than clusters of similar behavioural experience. Cases with higher numbers of behaviours were comparatively infrequent, which resulted in them

becoming isolates in the cluster solution rather than interpretable clusters. In effect, the high proportion of *non*-experienced behaviours within demographic subgroups made the cluster analysis output a count of experienced behaviours rather than an analysis of behaviour patterns.

I concluded that segmenting the data based on demographic characteristics was not helpful to revealing behavioural co-occurrence. Alternatively, I grouped the cases based on similar levels of behavioural experiences. This also minimized the effect of outliers and optimized the clustering process to reflect behaviours that co-occur among participants with similar numbers of behavioural experiences. Sub-samples based on the number of behaviours had the added benefit of enabling the cluster solution to be analysed for demographic differences between clusters.

The sample was divided into sub-samples of 700-900 cases, allowing for two panels of 300-400 cases in each sub-sample, one analysis panel and one validation panel. Stability and reliability analyses are documented in Appendix 5.

Variate

The variate entered into the cluster analysis was the 31 behaviours in the WBS. All variables utilize the same response set. The open-ended items 'Other behaviour like these' were not included in the cluster analysis. Demographic variables, impact and PSC variables were not included in the cluster analysis.

Multicolinearity

Multicolinearity is the correlation between multiple independent variables. The ideal situation is where there is high correlation between multiple independent variables and the dependent variables, but little correlation between independent variables (Hair, Black, et al., 2019, p. 311). The concern about highly correlated pairs of variables entered into a cluster analysis is that "the correlated variables [may] influence the cluster solution much more so than the several uncorrelated variables" (Hair, Black, et al., 2019, p. 211). Hair et al. recommend taking a pro-active approach by not including variables that are highly correlated in the cluster analysis. Hair identified 'high' correlation as 0.7 or above, and low correlation is below 0.5 (Hair, Black, et al., 2019, pp. 135-136). One further consideration is how critical multicollinearity is for these for these analyses as:

- I am not seeking to refine the list of behaviours, which was Hair et al.'s main concern in their discussion. The purpose of the cluster analysis is to see if and how the behaviours cluster together.
- While each behaviour is theoretically independent to each other, this assumption may not hold true in these cluster analyses as multiple validated survey measures are represented in the behaviour list that have not been measured together previously.
- If two behaviours that correlate highly are key to a cluster, that is a result, not an error.

The sub-samples for analyses were examined for the presence of multicollinearity between pairs of behaviours (see Annex 3 for Cluster analyses considerations). Pairs of behaviours that were highly correlated were noted[39] and investigated to see if the highly correlated items did or did not emerge as key behaviours in a cluster.

Two stage clustering method

A two stage cluster process was followed. Firstly, hierarchical clustering was used to verify that there was a structure in the data (no chaining) and to estimate the likely cluster solution or likely range of solutions. The hierarchical clustering was conducted using squared Euclidean distance (SEUCLID) similarity measure and Ward's cluster method. Secondly, K-means cluster process was used to maximise the unique properties of the clusters. This process also enabled me to examine different plausible cluster solutions. Using K-means cluster process I evaluated what was lost or gained by increasing or decreasing the number of clusters in the cluster solution. The results of this work are provided in the findings section below. Further considerations are provided in Appendix 3.

Criteria for the preferred cluster solution

The preferred cluster solutions were decided using the following criteria:

- Inspection of the agglomeration schedule from hierarchical clustering output;
- Unique behaviour patterns, marker behaviours, and overall behaviour recurrence profile;
- Parsimony gained from fewer clusters;
- Increased specificity from additional clusters;

[39] High and low correlations were assessed using Sambandam's rule of thumb that, when conducting cluster analyses, correlations below 0.5 are considered low correlation and correlations above 0.5 are considered high (Sambandam 2003 in Hair et al., 2019, p. 211)

- Existence of outliers in the cluster solution; and
- Existence of isolate groups in the cluster solution.

I explored increased specificity from additional clusters because I was searching for evidence that different constructs of unacceptable behaviour followed a unique behaviour profile. Specifically, I looked for sexualized behaviours, electronic behaviours, abuse of power, or ostracising behaviours that clustered together. I considered that sexual behaviours were most likely to be unique in terms of the experience of an individual, in terms of their impact on the target, and in the recognisability of sexualised behaviours compared to other constructs of unacceptable behaviour. This idea led me to expand the range of cluster solutions examined to four, five, six and even seven cluster solutions as I looked for cluster demarcation based at least partially on sexualized behaviours. Once a preferred cluster solution was identified, the stability and replicability of the cluster solution could be examined using the hold-out sample.

Tests of difference

The following tests of difference were used in these analyses to identify differentiating characteristics between the clusters in each cluster solution.

- The Chi-square test of difference was used for dichotomised variables such as gender (1=male 0=female).
- The Chi-square test of difference with post hoc comparisons and Bonferroni correction was used for non-dichotomised categorical variables such as comparison between three or more clusters.
- Analysis of variance was used for interval or continuous variables such as mean age group (possible range 1 to 11), mean number of behaviours selected (possible range 1 to 31), PSC (possible range 9 to 45), and impact score (possible range 0 to 24).

Sub-samples based on number of behaviours experienced

The experience of poor and unwanted behaviours is positively skewed. The average number of behaviours was 6.19, median was 4 behaviours and the mode was 1 behaviour (illustrated in figure below).

To compensate for this feature of the data, the case were divided into sub-samples based on the number of behaviours experienced. The sub-samples enabled

(i) Optimisation of group size for cluster analyses;

(ii) Reduction of the risk of chaining in the cluster solution;

(iii) Comparison of like with like based on the number of experiences of interpersonal mistreatment behaviours each participant disclosed; and to

(iv) Inclusion of a hold-out sample to test the stability and replicability of cluster solutions.

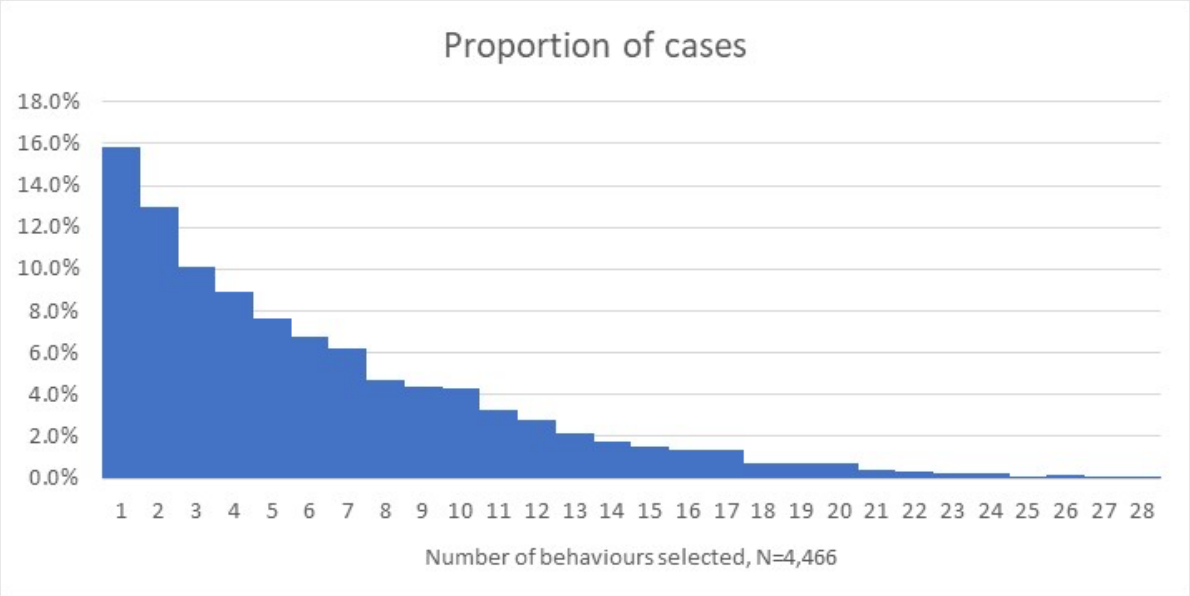


Figure 8. Distribution of number of behaviours experienced in the sample

The sample was divided into sub-samples based on the number of behaviours selected, which ensured similar levels of experience were compared in the cluster analyses (See Appendix 4 for detail). The sub-samples are:

- single behaviours;
- pairs of behaviours;
- three or four behaviours;
- five or six behaviours;
- seven eight or nine behaviours;
- 10 to 14 behaviours; and
- 15 to 24 behaviours.

7.4 Findings – Patterns of co-occurrence

Results are presented in two sections. First is a series of summary tables and figures of the cluster analysis results which provide an overview of the sample population. These

demonstrate how the composition of sub-samples changed as the number of behaviours experienced increased and how the impact scores changed as the number of behaviours increased.

The second results section provide detailed of the cluster solutions for the seven sub-samples. By presenting the cluster analysis results for all seven sub-samples the reader becomes familiar with how the experience of interpersonal mistreatment shifts and changes as the number of behaviours increases. The full suite of results can be found in the summary of cluster analysis results in Appendix 4.

7.5 Overview of sub-samples

The following graphs present summary metrics for each sub-sample with regards to gender, Service, age, mean recurrence of behaviours, impact score, and Psychosocial Safety Climate score. Each sub-sample is represented by the lowest value cluster, the highest value cluster, and the mean score for the whole sub-sample.

Gender

The study had an elevated proportion of female survey participants compared to population figures. In addition, the proportion of women in the sub-samples increased as the number of behaviours increased, from 28% female among those who had experienced single behaviours to 40% among those who experienced ten or more behaviours ($F=3.576$, $df(23, 4309)$ $p < .001$). Within sub-sample groups, clusters distinguished by gender only occurred when 15 or more behaviours were experienced.

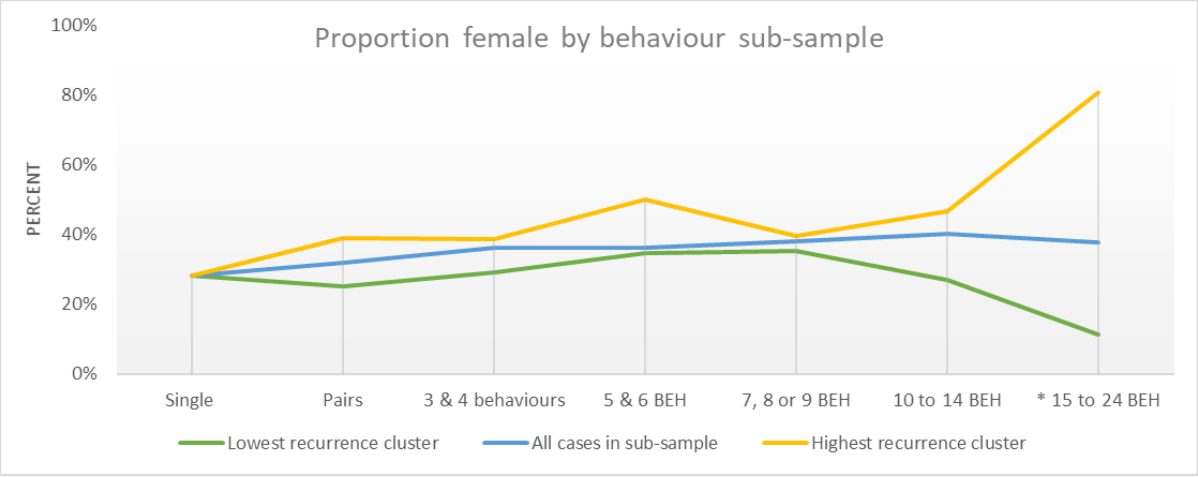


Figure 9. Proportion of female participants by behavioural frequency group

ADF members

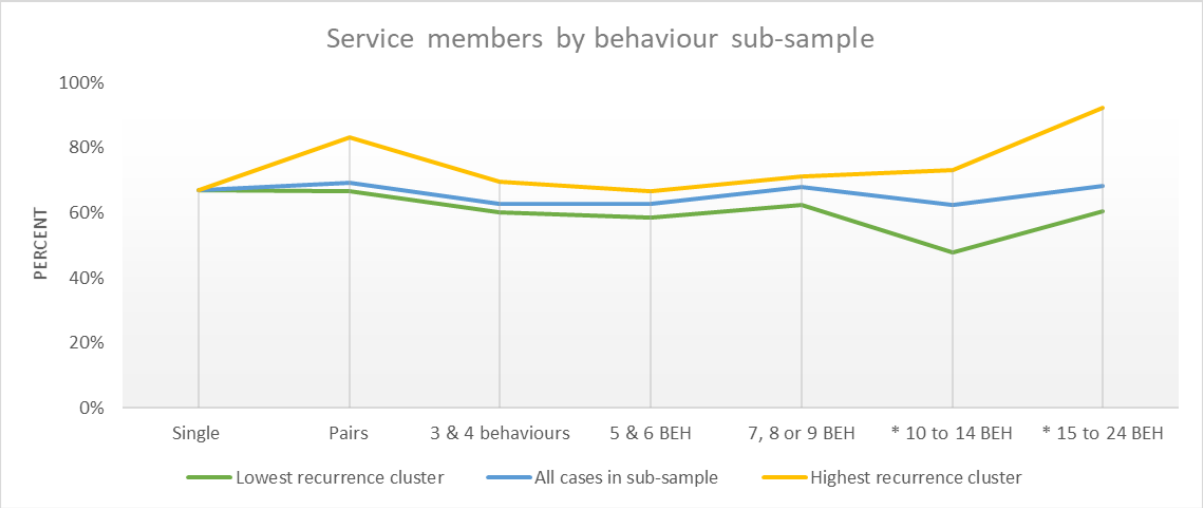


Figure 10. Proportion of service participants by behavioural frequency group

The proportion of ADF personnel sample population was lower than in the Defence workforce overall, but did not vary widely between sub-samples (62% to 69%, F=1.321.576, df(23, 4426) p<.139). Within sub-sample cluster solutions, Service differentiated between clusters when more than ten behaviours were experienced.

Age

Participants' age ranged between 18 years to 66+ years, with a mean age of 39.5 years. Mean age declined incrementally as the number of behaviours experienced increased, from 40.5 years among participants who experienced a single behaviour to 36 years among participants who experienced 24 behaviours (F=3.127, df (23, 4309) p < .001). Within sub-group cluster solutions, significant age differences occurred where seven or more behaviours were experienced.

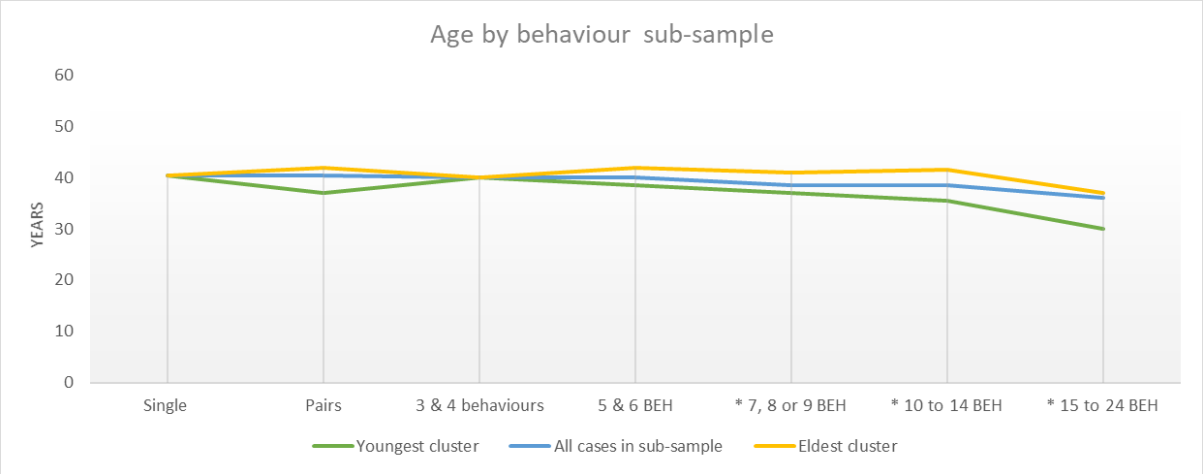


Figure 11. Mean age by behaviours experienced

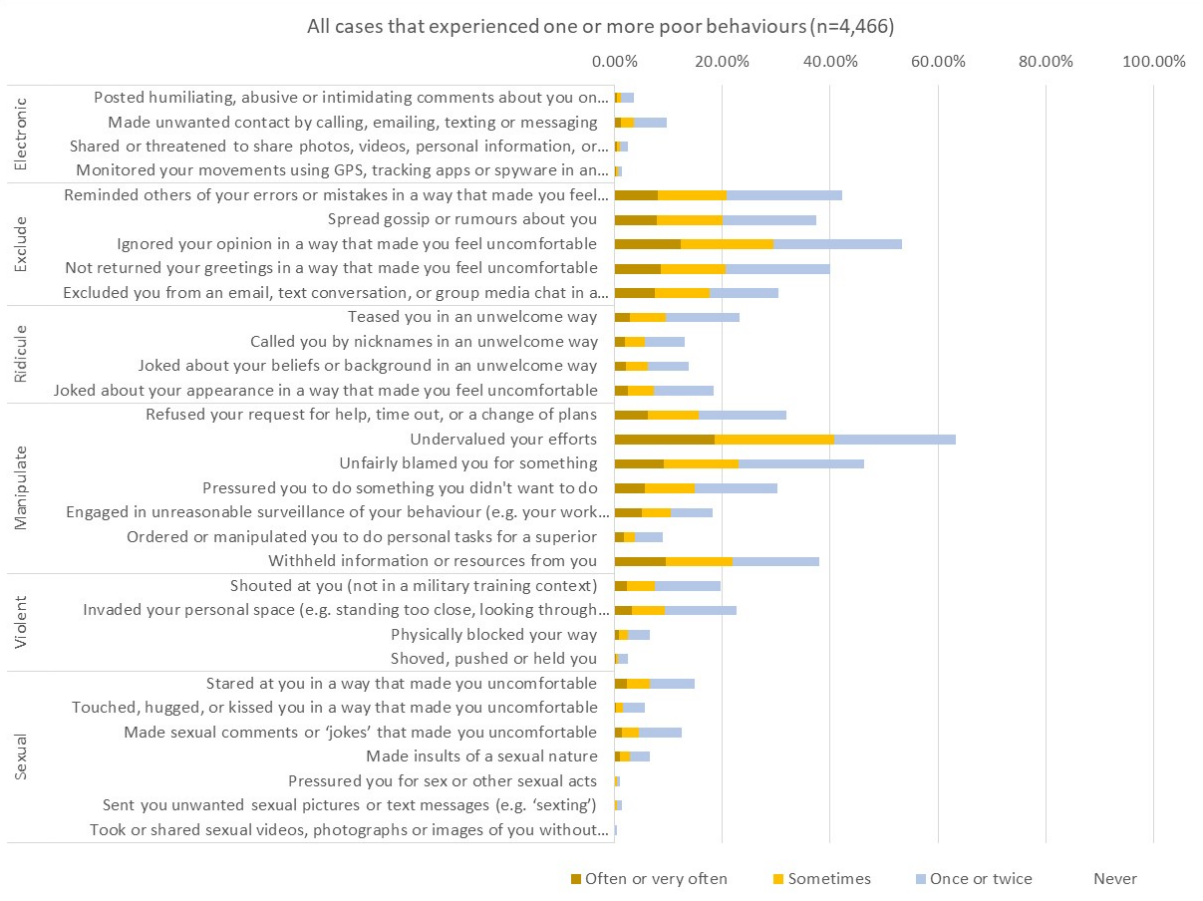


Figure 12. Behaviours experienced by all survey respondents

Overall frequency and recurrence of behaviours experienced

The overall frequency and recurrence of behavioural experience is provided in Figure 12 above. For this sample, the excluding behaviour *ignored your opinion in a way that made you feel uncomfortable* and the manipulating behaviour *undervalued your efforts* were the most frequently experienced behaviours in the sample. How often behaviours occurred, their impact on the survey participant, and the experience of interpersonal mistreatment changed markedly with the number of behaviours experienced.

Recurrence of behaviours by sub-sample

Recurrence of behaviours increased as the number of behaviours increased, ($F=45.746$, df (23, 4426) $p<.001$). Within the cluster solutions, behaviour recurrence differences were statistically significant in all sub-samples. That is, the participants with the lowest behavioural recurrence clustered together and other clusters were differentiated by higher recurrence in comparison. This illustrates that the clustering process successfully grouped cases on similar levels of recurrence within each sub-sample.

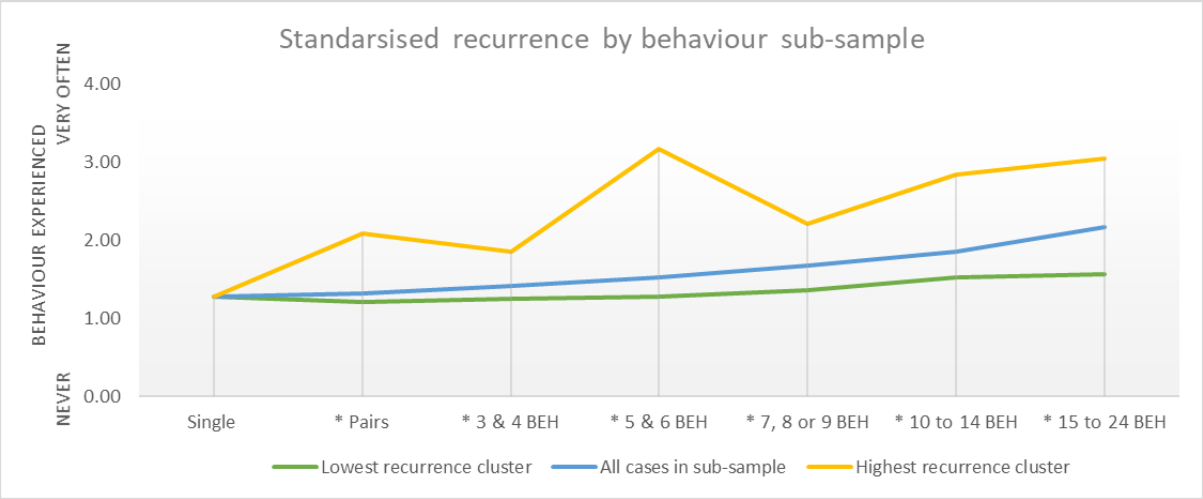


Figure 13. Mean recurrence by behavioural frequency group

Low mean recurrence[40] is associated with the largest cluster in all behaviour sub-groups. Clusters with the highest mean recurrence [41] could be isolate groups (a group much smaller than the other clusters) and were mostly concentrated in the sub-samples where more than 10 behaviours were experienced.

[40] Low mean recurrence is where the behaviours for the cluster are experienced ‘once or twice’.
[41] High mean recurrence is where the behaviours for the cluster are experienced 'often' or ‘very often’.

Impact score

An impact score could be calculated for all participants who answered items about their most serious incident. The impact scores increased with the number of behaviours experienced and with increased recurrence of behaviours (F=90.031, df (23, 3783) p<.001). Within the cluster solutions for all sub-samples the differences in impact scores were statistically significant.

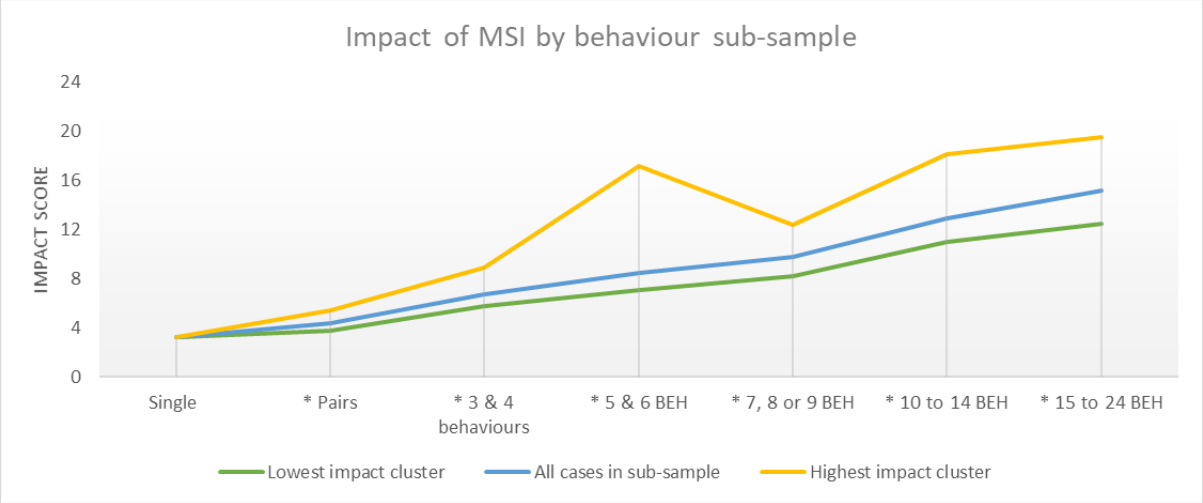


Figure 14. Mean impact index score by behavioural frequency group

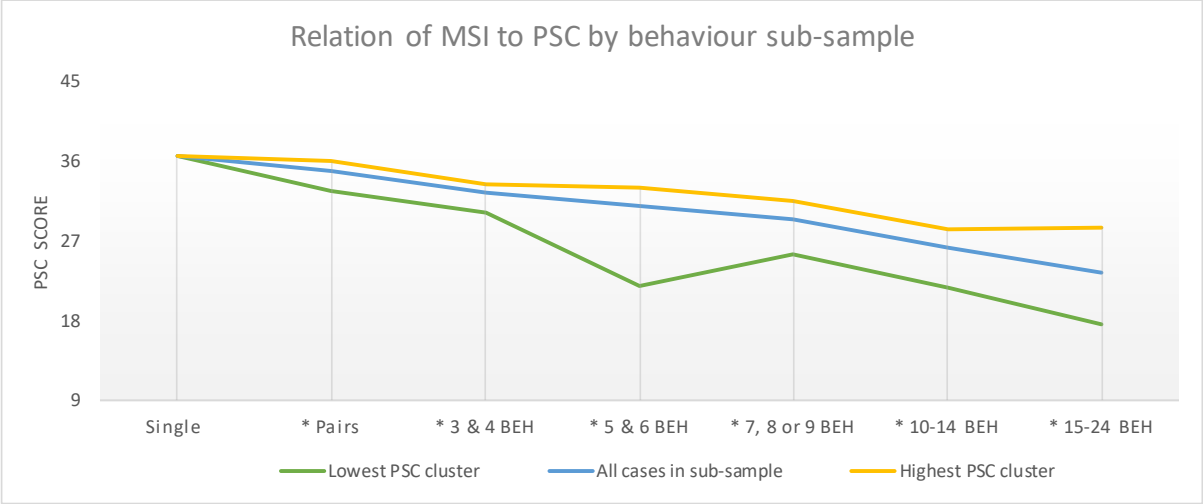


Figure 15. Psychosocial Safety Climate score by behavioural frequency group

Psychosocial safety climate score

All participants were presented with the modified psychosocial safety climate (PSC) items. PSC scores steadily decreased as the number of behaviours increased (F=43.992, df(23, 4051) p<.001)[42]. Within the sub-sample cluster solutions, PSC scores distinguished between clusters in all behaviour sub-samples.

Summary: What the sub-sample differences tell us about the experience of unacceptable behaviours

Increased number of unacceptable behaviours is associated with increased recurrence of those behaviours. These two parameters, increased number and increased recurrence, both signify intensification of behavioural experiences. Not surprisingly then, increased number of behaviours is also strongly associated negative impact, and reduced psychosocial safety scores.

Few reliable demographic differences

Demographics (gender, age, Service) rarely characterised different sub-samples or different clusters withing the sub-sample cluster solutions. However, demographics became more important as the number of behaviours increased. Age differentiated the cluster profile with seven behaviours or more, Service members differentiated the cluster profile with ten or more behaviours, and gender differentiated the cluster profile in the 15 to 24 behaviour sub-sample.

It appears that in the Defence organisation the experience of unacceptable behaviours is similar across demographic groups where the number of behaviours remain less than seven. Thereafter some (not all) clusters express gender, Service and/or age specific patterns of experience.

Recurrence, Impact and PSC scores

Behavioural recurrence, impact, and PSC measures were all highly sensitive markers between clusters in the cluster solutions, regardless of how many behaviours were

[42] The relationship between psychosocial safety climate and number of behaviours is linear between the sub-groups *pairs* to *10-14 behaviours* (F=54.696, df(13, 3756) p<.001). Within the 15 to 24 behaviour sub-group there is no relationship (F=1.182, df(9, 295) p=.306).

experienced. As number of behaviours increased, recurrence and impact scores increased, and PSC decreased.

In summary, cluster analyses discriminated between cases based on recurrence and behaviours experienced. Recurrence, impact and PSC scores differentiated between clusters in the cluster solutions for each sub-group. Demographic characteristics rarely distinguished between clusters in the cluster solutions. The sub-samples for 10 to 14 behaviours and for 15 to 24 behaviours are of particular interest as they had the most distinguishing markers between clusters. These two sub-samples will be discussed in further detail in section.

7.6 Patterns of behaviour derived from cluster analyses

The cluster analyses provide answers to the research question "What patterns of behavioural co-occurrence arise when not constrained to one construct?

In this section I provide the results of the cluster analyses for behaviour sub-samples of pairs, three or four, five or six, seven to nine, ten to 14, and 15 to 24 behaviours. I also provide a summary of the stability and reliability analyses. Detailed results of the cluster analyses for all sub-samples are provided in Annex 3, as are details of the reliability and validation outcomes.

Patterns that could demonstrate defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment

When interpreting the cluster analysis solutions, I was looking for examples of behaviour experiences that typified different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Given the findings from the document analysis, I considered the following might be present as a distinct cluster:

- Where a cluster is typified by predominantly excluding behaviours this could indicate an experiential pattern for ostracism, distinct to other types of interpersonal mistreatment.
- Where a cluster is typified by behaviours that indicate formal power difference, this could indicate an experiential pattern for abusive supervision, distinct to other types of interpersonal mistreatment. There are five behaviours that indicate formal power difference:
  Undervalued your efforts
  Refusing your request for help, time out, or a change in plans,
  Excessive surveillance of your behaviour,
  Being ordered or manipulated to do personal tasks for a superior, and
  Withholding information or resources from you.
- Where a cluster is typified by sexualised behaviours, this could indicate an experiential pattern for sexual misconduct, distinct to other types of interpersonal mistreatment.
- Where a cluster is typified by e-behaviours, this could indicate an experiential pattern for cyber bullying/harassment, distinct to other types of interpersonal mistreatment.

The various cluster solutions for each sub-group was scrutinised for evidence of such concentrations of behavioural experiences.

Frequency of single behavioural experiences

708 survey participants (15.8%) experienced one unacceptable behaviour. The level of recurrence was low. Being undervalued was the most frequently selected behaviour. The following behaviours did not happen as single experiences:

- Posted humiliating, abusive or intimidating comments about you on social media
- Shared or threatened to share photos, videos, personal information, or anything that's humiliating or embarrassing to you
- Monitored your movements using GPS, tracking apps or spyware in an intrusive way
- Called you by nicknames in an unwelcome way
- Ordered or manipulated you to do personal tasks for a superior
- Physically blocked your way
- Shoved, pushed or held you
- Pressured you for sex or other sexual acts
- Sent you unwanted sexual pictures or text messages (e.g. 'sexting')
- Took or shared sexual videos, photographs or images of you without your consent

These behaviours were also less common in other sub-samples.

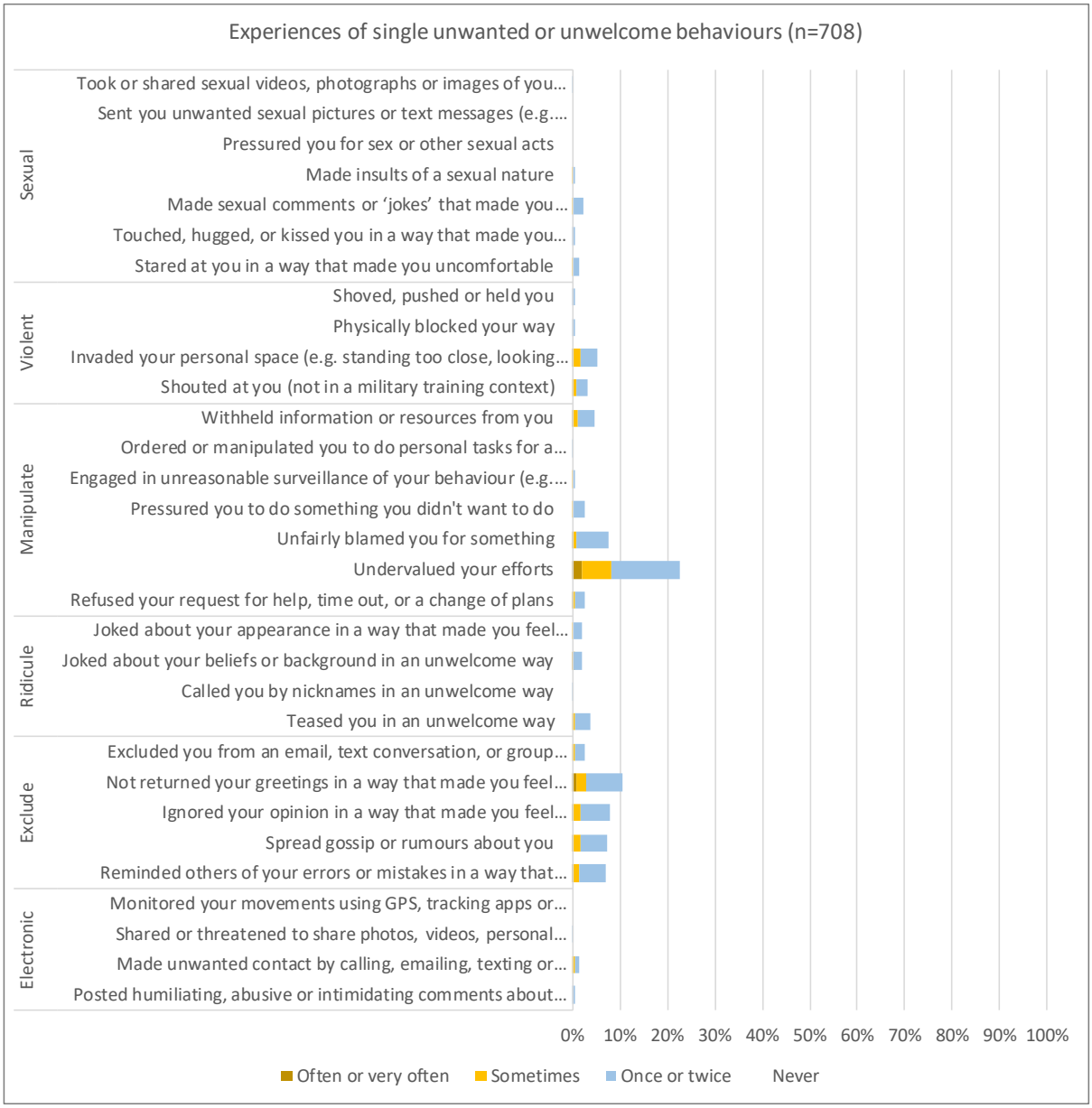


Figure 16. Experience of unacceptable behaviours within single behaviours sub-sample

Patterns in paired behaviour sub-group

There were 581 survey participants in the pairs sub-sample, randomly assigned to an analysis panel (N=285) and a validation panel (N=296). This sub-sample experienced 27 of the 31 unacceptable behaviours.

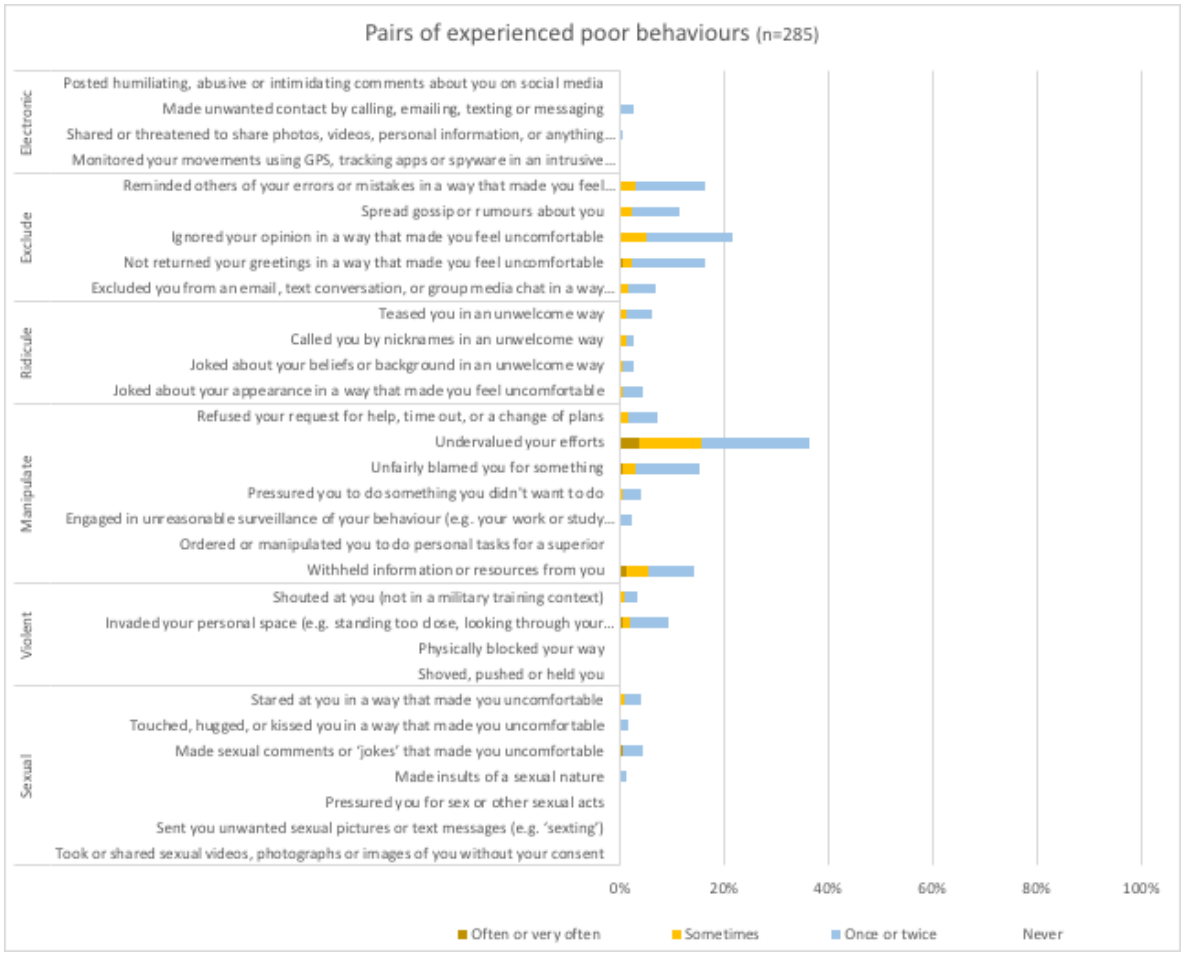


Figure 17. Behaviour frequency in pairs sub-sample

Excluding and manipulative behaviours were most commonly experienced, as with the frequency of the experience of single behaviours. The behaviours not experienced were:

- Took or shared sexual videos, photographs or images of you without your consent
- Shoved, pushed or held you
- Monitored your movements using GPS, tracking apps or spyware in an intrusive way
- Posted humiliating, abusive or intimidating comments about you on social media

Four cluster solution was optimal

Hierarchical clustering indicted a four cluster solution. I investigated both a three and four cluster solution using K-means cluster analysis. The four cluster solution provided the greatest differentiation of unique clusters: three clusters that were based on single behaviours, and one cluster with very low recurrence for all behaviours. All clusters showed a notable lack of sexualized, electronic and ridiculing behaviours (Figure 18).

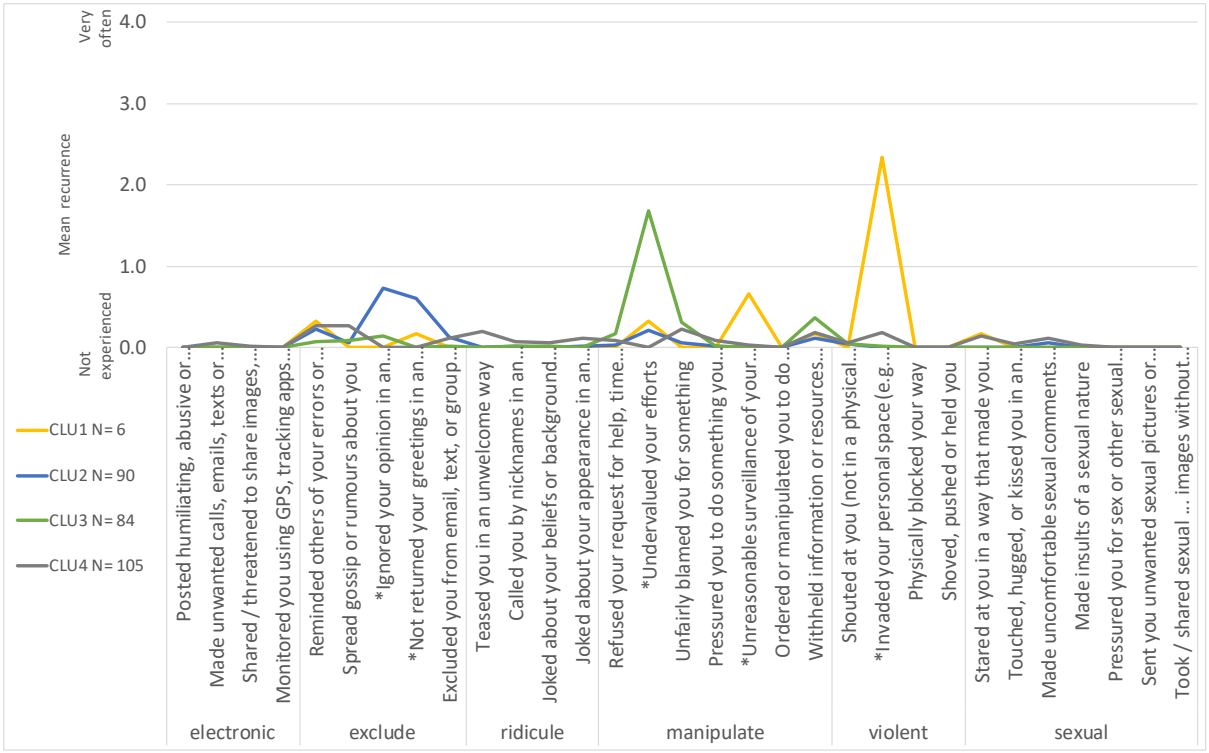


Figure 18. Pairs sub-group - 4 Cluster Solution behaviour recurrence profile

The clusters were differentiated by the recurrence of five behaviours, as noted by an asterisk in the figure.

Characteristics of the four cluster solution within sub-sample - pairs of behaviours

There were no demographic differences between the four clusters by gender (χ^2=4.762 (df 2) p=0.092), Service composition (χ^2=6.708 (df 6) p=0.349) or age (F=2.524 (df 2, 273) p=0.082).

The level of mean recurrence was low (less than once or twice) for all clusters, with the exception of the three key behaviours that distinguish Cluster 1, Cluster 2 and Cluster 3, which are; *Invaded your personal space*, *undervalued your efforts*, and being ignored. While the overall mean recurrence was very low, these three key behaviours were experienced at different levels of recurrence (F=14.794 (df 3, 281), p<0.001) so that the mean recurrence for Cluster 1 was significantly higher than Cluster 3, which had significantly higher recurrence than Cluster 2 and Cluster 4. The three behaviours were paired with a wide array of other unacceptable behaviours.

All clusters had low impact scores but within that there were significant differences (F=112.609 (df 3, 220) p=0.048). Unexpectedly, the cluster with the highest impact score was not the one with the highest behavioral recurrence. Cluster 3, which featured *undervalued your efforts* expressed higher levels of impact than the other clusters (Cluster 3 $_{impact}$=5.45) and Cluster 2, which featured *Ignored your opinion* and *not returned your greeting* had a lower impact score than other clusters (Cluster 2 $_{impact}$=3.79). Psychosocial safety climate scores were positive for all clusters (the range was 32.8 to 37.6). None the less, in post hoc tests the PSC scores were different between Cluster 4 and Cluster 3 (Cluster 4 $_{PSC}$ =36.0 compared to Cluster 3 $_{PSC=}$32.8, F=3.383 (df 3, 250) p=0.019).[43]

Behavioural patterns in the cluster solution for pairs subgroup

In the scenario of pairs of behavioural experience there are some indications that indicate different types of unacceptable behaviour are experienced in lived experience.

- Excluding behaviours were mostly experienced by members of cluster two, 90 individuals who mostly experienced *Ignored your opinion*, and *not returned your greetings*.
- Behaviours that indicate formal power difference were experienced by Cluster 1, six participants who experienced *Invaded your personal space*, paired with *Unreasonable surveillance* or *Undervalued your efforts* or *Reminded you of your errors or mistakes*.
- The experience of sexualised behaviours and electronic behaviours were not consistently paired with any other behaviours.

With only two behaviours to draw upon, these patterns hint that defined constructs are evident in lived experience of these survey participants. At this stage of the analyses I wondered if these patterns would be reflected in the cluster solutions of other sub-groups or if they would develop in a completely different way.

Patterns in the 3 and 4 behaviour sub-sample

There were 852 survey participants who experienced 3 or 4 behaviours, randomly assigned to an analysis panel (N=427) and a validation panel (N=425). Within this sub-sample 28 of

[43] The small size and wide standard deviation within Cluster 1 led to PSC scores that were not significantly different to the other clusters in the Pairs sub-sample.

the 31 unacceptable behaviours were experienced. Multicollinearity between pairs of behaviours was assessed as minimal.[44]

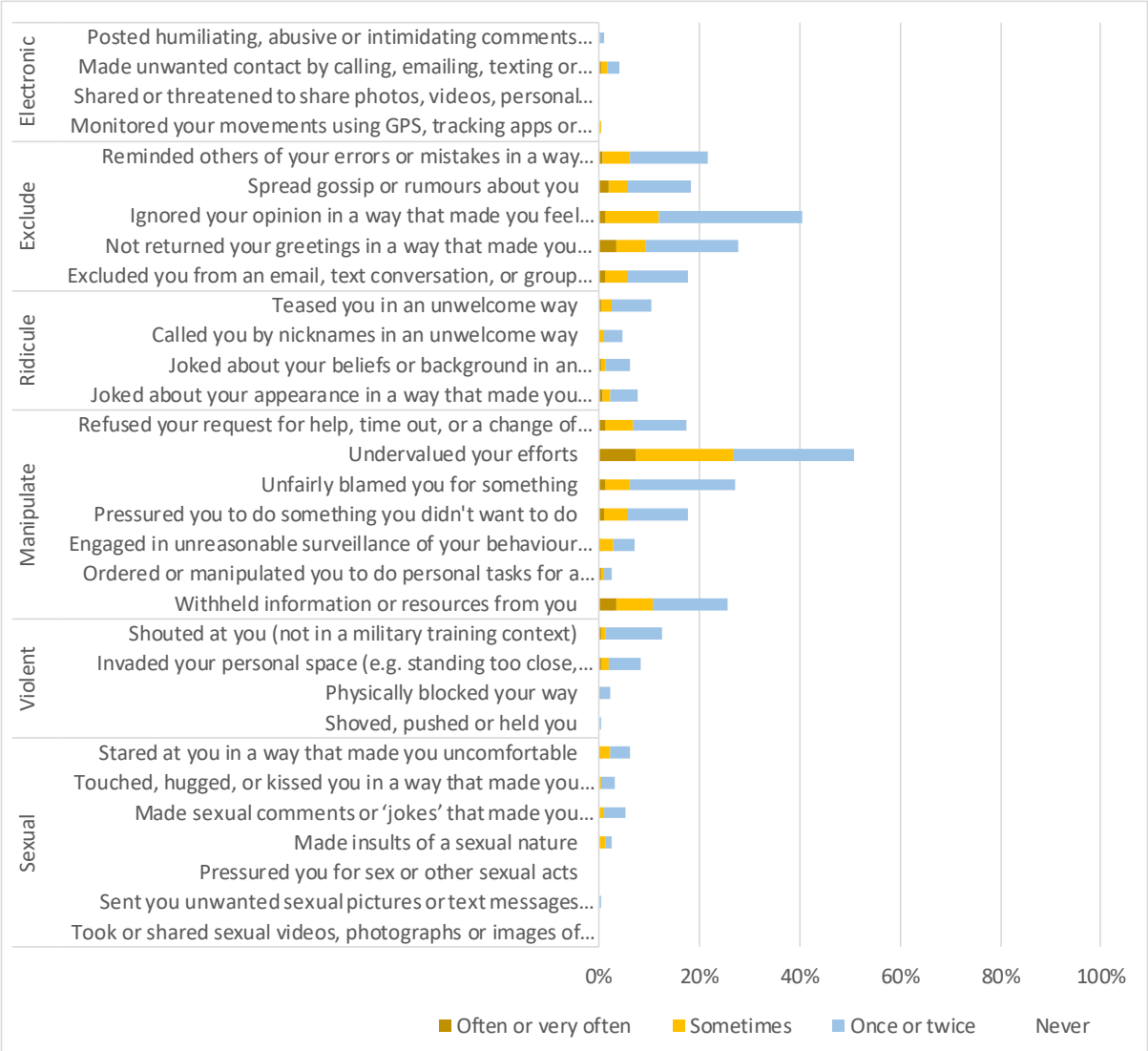


Figure 19.Frequency of behaviours experienced - 3 & 4 behaviours subgroup

The following behaviours were not experienced in the 3-4 behaviour sub-sample:

- Shared or threatened to share photos, videos, personal information, or anything that's humiliating or embarrassing to you
- Took or shared sexual videos, photographs or images of you without your consent
- Pressured you for sex or other sexual acts.

[44] Multicollinearity within the variate was assessed as minimal. Among the 3 & 4 behaviours sub-sample the highest correlation between pairs of behaviours was 0.466, which is within the acceptable threshold of .5.

Two cluster solution was optimal

Hierarchical clustering indicted a two, four, or possibly a seven cluster solution. I investigated all solutions using K-means cluster analysis. All cluster solutions showed a notable lack of sexualized and electronic behaviours.

The two cluster solution was preferred because it revealed the basic dichotomy in the data – either low recurrence with no distinguishing behaviours, or low recurrence with one distinguishing behaviour. The four and seven cluster solutions did provided variations on this theme, but did not produce a cluster that identified unique behavioural experiences of ostracism, sexualized or electronic harassment.

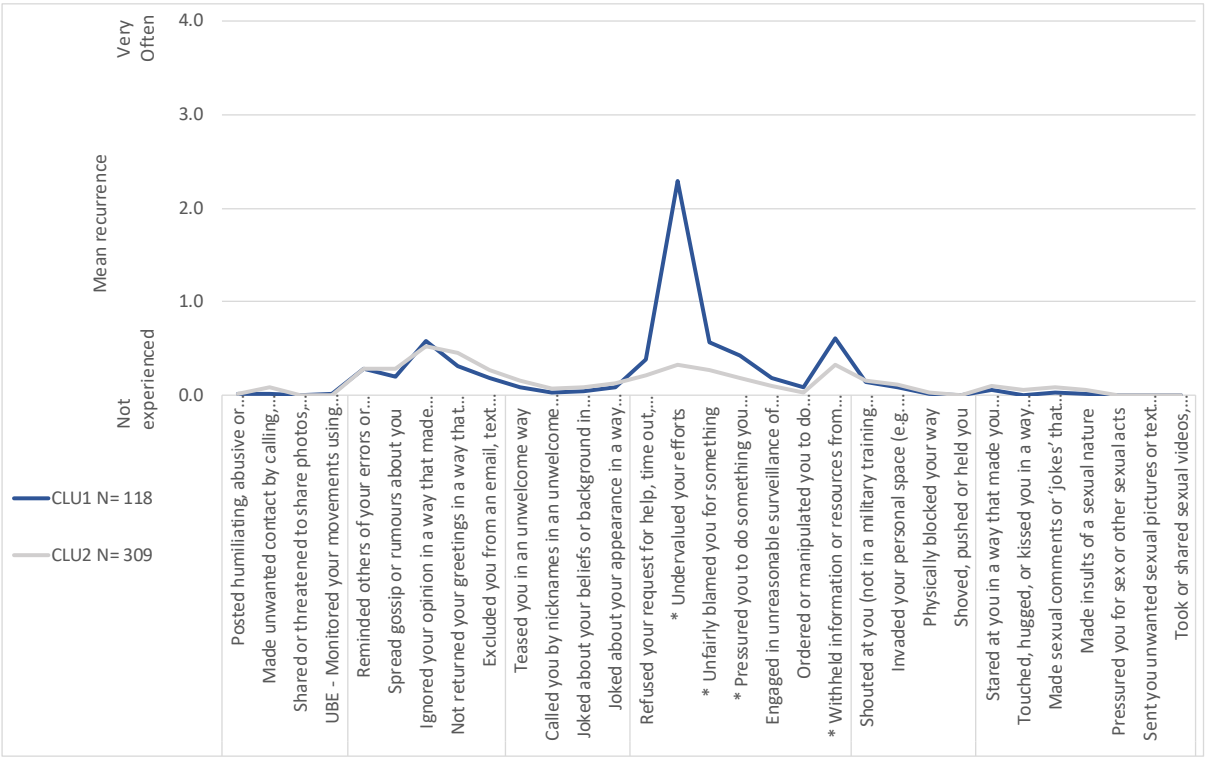


Figure 20. Two cluster solutions for the 3 & 4 behaviours subgroup – behaviour recurrence profile

The two clusters were differentiated by the recurrence of four manipulating behaviours differentiated between the clusters, as noted by an asterisk in the figure.

Characteristics of the two cluster solution within the sub-sample – 3 & 4 behaviours experienced

There are no demographic differences between the two clusters by gender (χ^2=2.947 (df 1) p=0.086), Service composition (χ^2=2.768 (df 3) p=0.429) or age (F=0.091 (df 1, 415) p=0.888).

The recurrence of behavioural experiences is low (less than once or twice in the prior 12 months) with the exception of *undervalued your efforts* which had a much higher mean recurrence in Cluster 1 compared to Cluster 2 ($F=184.744$, (df 1, 425), $p<0.001$).

The impact of the most serious incident experience was higher for Cluster 1 than Cluster 2 (Cluster 1 $_{Impact=}8.91$, Cluster 2 $_{Impact=}5.80$; $F=31.861$, (df 1, 379), $p<.001$).

While overall PSC scores were positive, participants in Cluster 1 had lower PSC scores than those in Cluster 1 (Cluster 1 $_{PSC}$ =30.22 compared to Cluster 2 $_{PSC}$ =33.51, $F=13.188$ (df 1, 400) $p<0.001$).

Behavioural patterns in the cluster solution for the 3 & 4 behaviours subgroup

As with the frequency of paired behaviours and single behaviours, excluding and manipulative behaviours were the most common behaviours experienced.
Three quarters of cases fell into a single undifferentiated low recurrence low impact cluster (Cluster 2). Any combination of behaviours is equally likely for this cluster.

The higher level of recurrence on one behaviour *Undervalued your efforts* in Cluster 2 is the main distinguishing feature between the two clusters. Cluster 2 participants also experienced more of the behaviour *Withheld information or resources from you* and both of these behaviours indicate formal power differences between the target and the instigator.

The experience of sexualized behaviours and electronic behaviours were rare compared to other unacceptable behaviours and were evenly distributed between the two clusters. Similarly, ridiculing and violent behaviours did not differentiate between the clusters. Excluding behaviours were experienced in a similar pattern for both clusters.

Impact and PSC scores varied in step with behavioural recurrence. These findings illustrate that behaviour recurrence impacts participants independently to the number of different behaviours experienced.

Patterns in the 5 and 6 behaviour sub-group

There were 646 survey participants in the sub-sample of participants who experienced 5 or 6 behaviours, randomly assigned to an analysis panel (N=315) and a validation panel (N=331). Within this sub-sample all 31 unacceptable behaviours were experienced. Multicollinearity between pairs of behaviours was assessed as minimal.[45]

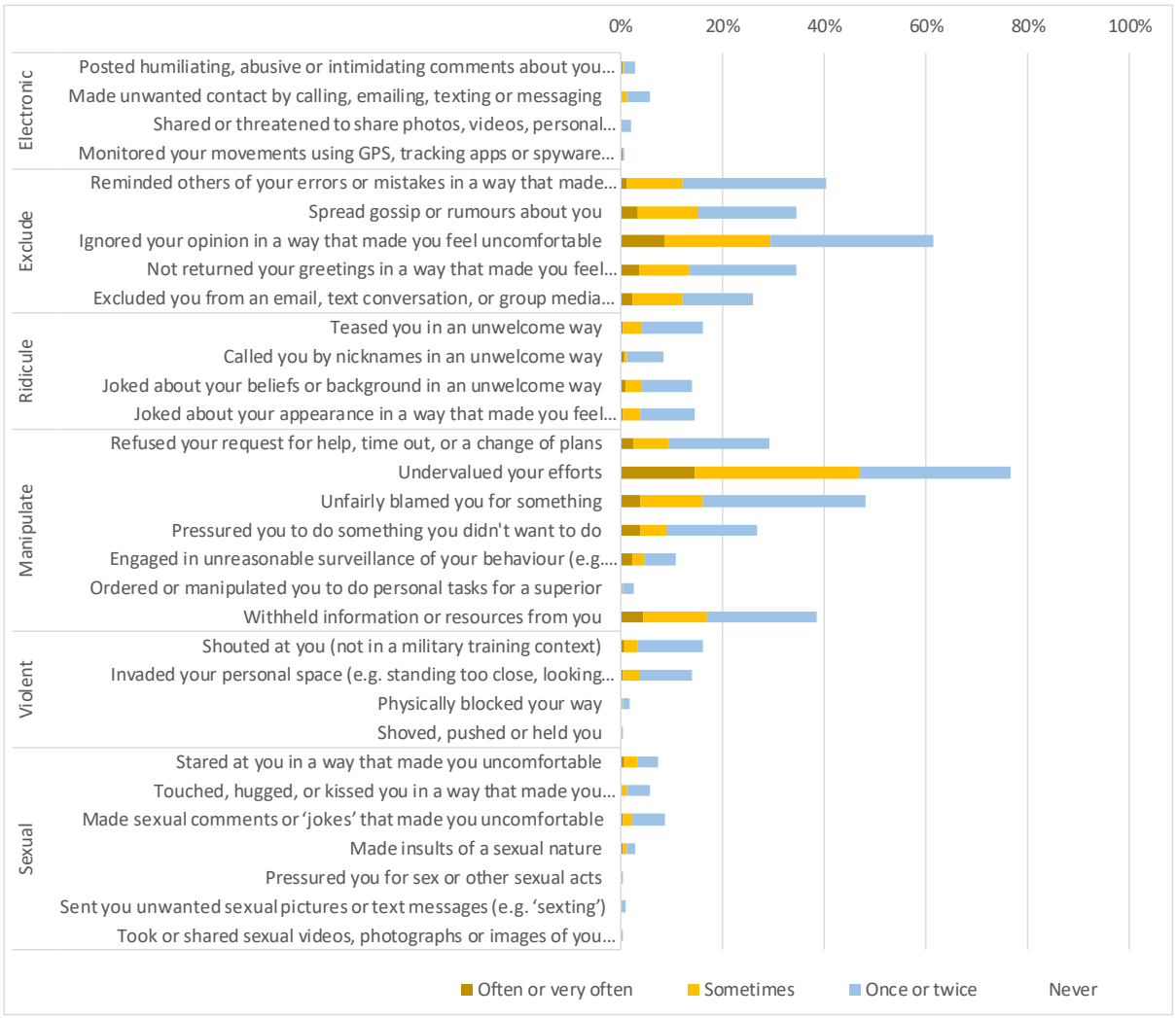


Figure 21. Behaviour frequency - 5 & 5 behaviours sub-sample

[45] Multicollinearity within the variate was assessed as minimal. Among the 5 & 6 behaviours sub-sample the highest correlation between pairs of behaviours was 0.491, which is within the acceptable threshold of .5.

Four cluster solution was optimal

Hierarchical clustering indicted a two, possibly four or seven cluster solution. Using K-means cluster analysis I investigated two, three, four and five cluster solutions.[46] All cluster solutions showed a notable lack of sexualized and electronic behaviours clustered together. The four cluster solution provided meaningful discrimination by behaviour and recurrence patterns with fewer clusters than the seven cluster solution indicated by the hierarchical cluster analysis. Most clusters are defined by multiple behaviours.

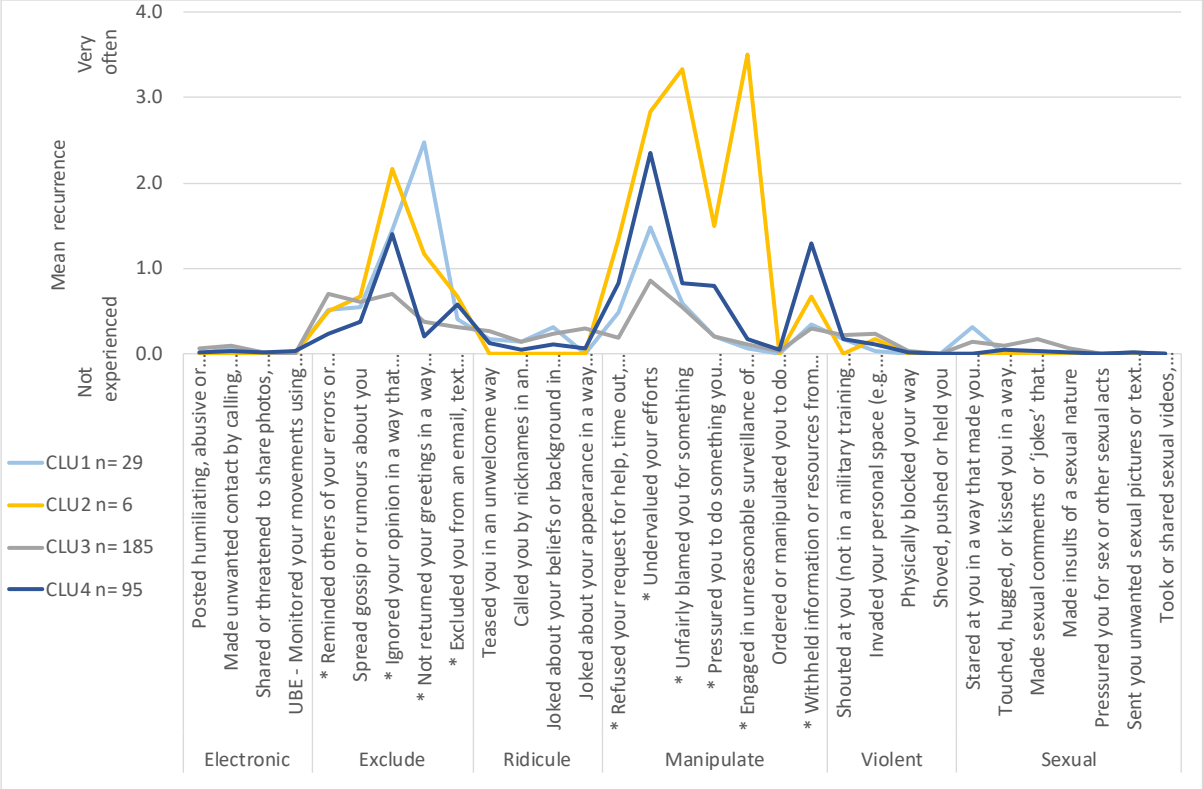


Figure 22. Four cluster solution for the 5 & 6 behaviours subgroup – behaviour recurrence profile

The recurrence of ten excluding and manipulating behaviours differentiated between the clusters, as noted by an asterisk in the figure.

[46] During these analyses the results from the K-means process illustrated how it optimised group membership. The K-means process re-allocates cases to clusters to maximise homogeneity within clusters each time the cluster parameters are set – which resulted in very different clusters of the data for this sub-group. Unlike hierarchical cluster analyses processes, K-means does not necessarily fragment small clusters when the number of clusters was increased. In fact, these clusters can reform with increased number of cases. However, throughout this series of cluster analyses the largest cluster remained stable.

Characteristics of the four cluster solution within the sub-sample – 5 & 6 behaviours experienced

There are no significant differences between the four clusters by gender (χ^2=0.383 (df 1) p=0.826), Service composition (χ^2=2.368 (df 3) p=0.883) or age (F=0.091 (df 2, 295) p=0.106).

The recurrence of behaviours varies widely between clusters, where Cluster 3 had the lowest mean recurrence and Cluster 2 the highest (Cluster 3 $_{\text{Recurrence Score}}$=6.99, Cluster 2 $_{\text{Recurrence Score}}$=18.50; F=80.399, (df 3, 311), p<0.001).

The impact of the most serious incident also varied widely, where Cluster 3 had the lowest mean recurrence and Cluster 2 the highest (Cluster 3 $_{\text{Impact Score}}$=7.04, Cluster 2 $_{\text{Impact Score}}$=17.17; F=12.138, (df 3, 279), p<.001).

PSC scores for the clusters ranged from negative to positive. Participants in Cluster 2 had lower PSC scores than in Cluster 3 (Cluster 2 $_{\text{PSC}}$ =22.00, Cluster 3 $_{\text{PSC}}$ =33.03, F=8.409 (df 3, 279) p<0.001). Considering the results from earlier analyses, these results indicate that the impact of behavioural recurrence is an additional negative impact to participants to the number of behaviours experienced.

Behavioural patterns in the cluster solution for the 5 & 6 behaviours sub-sample

Excluding and manipulative behaviours were the most commonly experienced, as with the frequency of earlier sub-samples.

More than half of the cases fell into a single low recurrence low impact cluster (Cluster 3, N=185). The mean recurrence was less than 'Once or twice' for all behaviours.

Higher levels of recurrence were expressed through six of the excluding and manipulating behaviours. Cluster 2 (N=6) experienced very high recurrence of *Undervalued your efforts*, *unfairly blamed you for something*, and *engaged in unreasonable surveillance*. The two medium sized clusters (Cluster 1 and Cluster 4) reflect the general pattern of behavioural experience demonstrated in Cluster 3 but at different levels of recurrence.

The experience of sexualized behaviours and electronic behaviours were rare compared to other unacceptable behaviours and did not differentiate the clusters. Similarly, the experience of ridiculing and violent behaviours were infrequent and did not differentiate

between the clusters. That is, any sexualised, electronic, ridiculing or violent behaviours were distributed randomly between the clusters. This repeats earlier findings that these types of behaviours are equally likely to co-occur in any combination.

Excluding behaviours and manipulating behaviours were experienced in a similar pattern for all clusters, albeit with variations. There is a pattern emerging of excluding and manipulating behaviours being the primary markers of the clusters and other behaviours being inter-woven or evenly distributed with these more frequently experienced behaviours. Once again impact and PSC scores varied in step with behavioural recurrence. These findings illustrate that how often a behaviour is experienced impacts participants independently to the number of different behaviours experienced.

Patterns in the 7, 8 and 9 behaviour sub-group

There were 682 survey participants who experienced 7, 8 or 9 behaviours, randomly assigned to an analysis panel (N=337) and a validation panel (N=345). Within this sub-sample all 31 unacceptable behaviours were experienced. Multicollinearity between pairs of behaviours was assessed as minimal.[47]

[47] Multicollinearity within the variate was assessed as minimal. Among the 7, 8, or 9 behaviours sub-sample the highest correlation between pairs of behaviours was 0.490, which is within the acceptable threshold of .5.

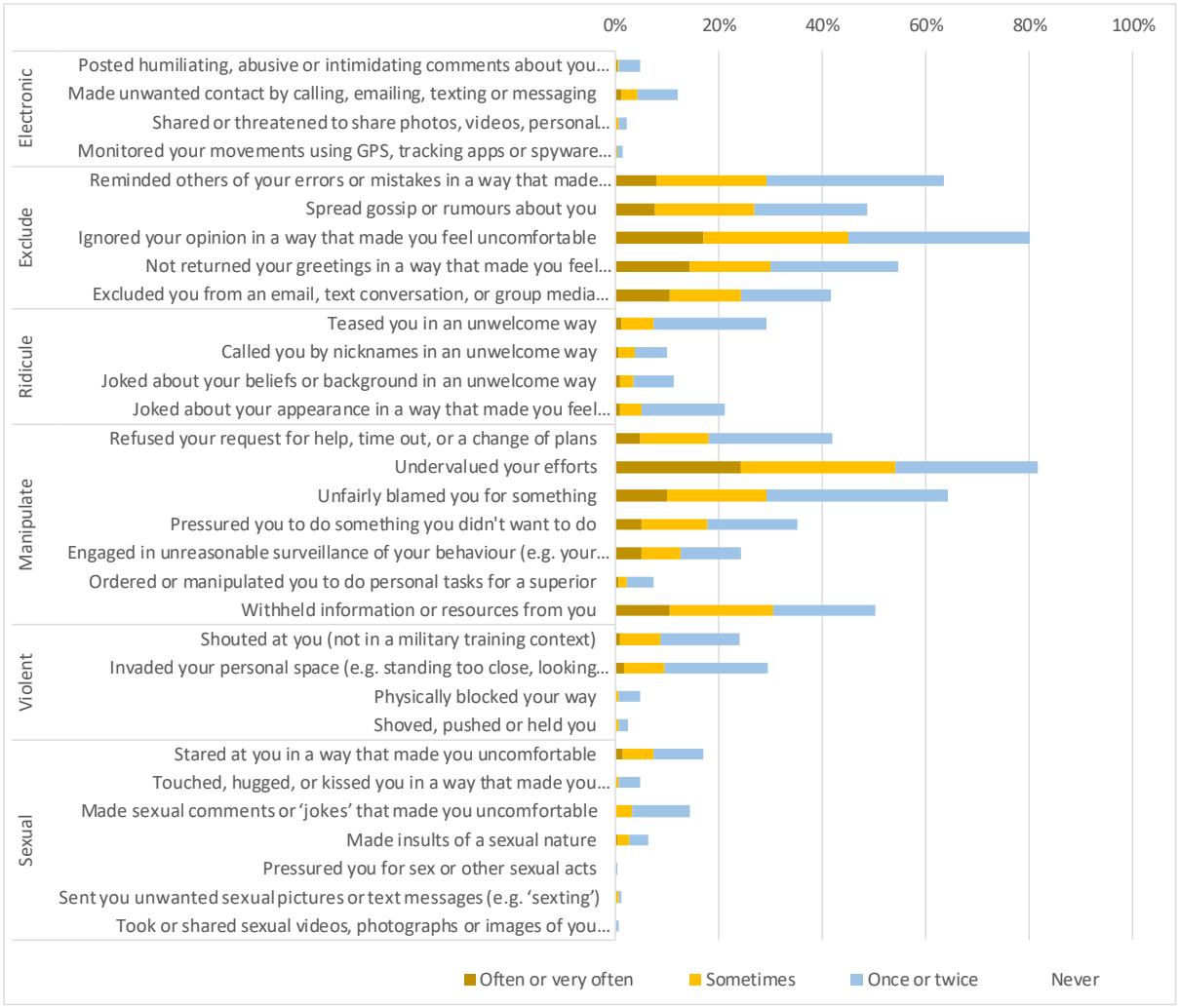


Figure 23. Behaviour frequency - 7, 8 or 9 behaviours sub-sample

Two cluster solution was optimal

Hierarchical clustering indicted a two or five cluster solution. Using K-means cluster analysis I investigated two, three, four and five cluster solutions. The five cluster solution repeated the main behavioural pattern at three levels of recurrence. The two cluster solution shows the same behaviour profile as the five cluster solution, including differences on three key behaviours, but without the duplication at different levels of recurrence. All cluster solutions showed a notable lack of sexualized and electronic behaviours clustered together.

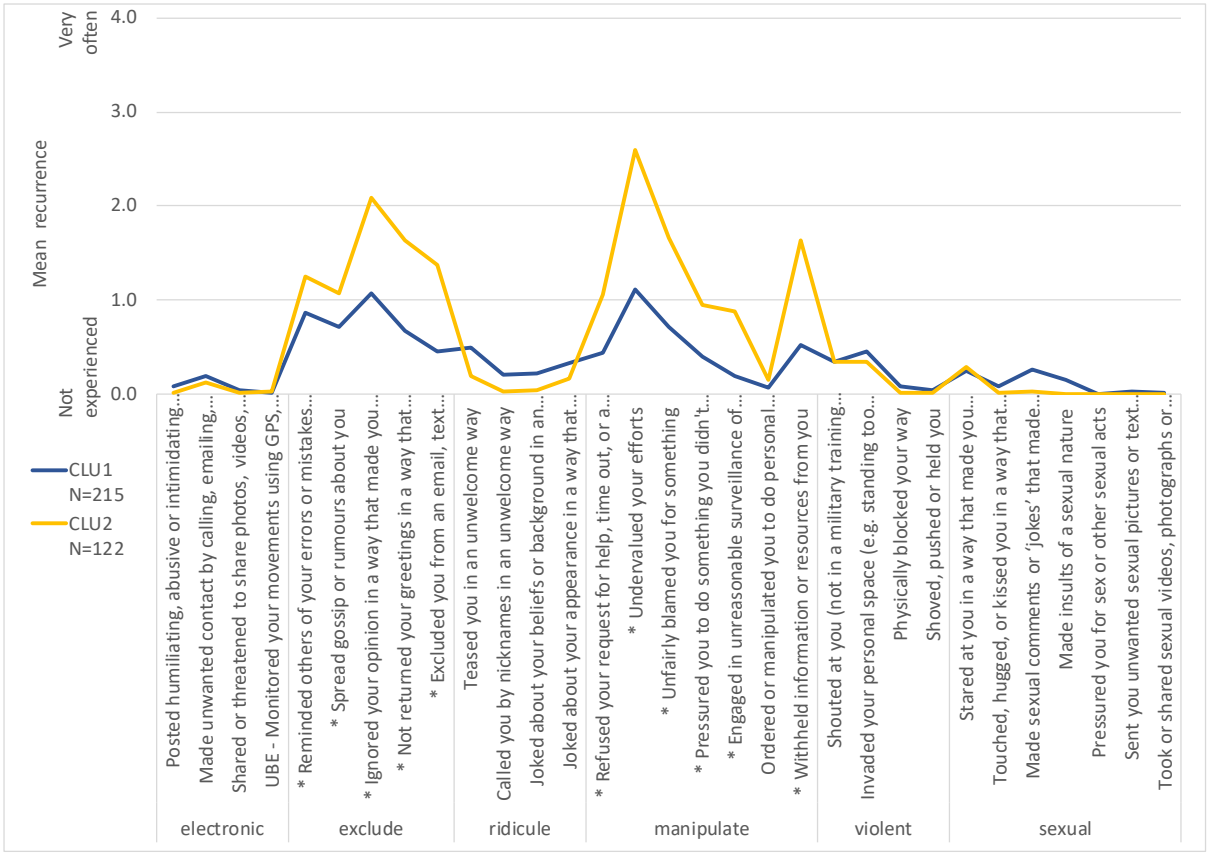


Figure 24. Two cluster solution for the 7, 8 or 9 behaviours sub-sample – behaviours recurrence profile

The two clusters were differentiated on the recurrence of eleven manipulating and excluding behaviours, as noted by an asterisk in the figure.

Characteristics of the two cluster solution within the sub-sample – 7, 8 or 9 behaviours experienced

There are no differences between the two clusters by gender (χ^2=0.261, (df 1), p=0.609) or Service composition (χ^2=6.201, (df 1), p=0.185). The mean age of participants in Cluster 1 was significantly younger than Cluster 2 (Cluster 1 $_{Age}$=5.18, Cluster 2 $_{Age}$=6.00; F=10.03, (df 1, 321), p=0.002; roughly 37 years and 41 years respectively).

Behaviour recurrence was lower for Cluster 1 compared to Cluster 2 (Cluster 1 $_{Recurrence}$=10.51, Cluster 2 $_{Recurrence}$=18.02; F=371.718, (df 1, 335), p<0.001).

The impact of the most serious incident experience was higher for Cluster 2 than Cluster 1 (Cluster 1 $_{Impact\ score}$=8.17 compared to Cluster 2 $_{Impact\ score}$=12.42; F=41.164, (df 1, 301), p<0.001).

The PSC score for Cluster 1 was positive, and higher than Cluster 2, which was in the neutral range (Cluster 1 $_{PSC=}$31.66, Cluster $_{PSC}$ =25.63; F=37.424 (df 1, 307) p<0.001). These results again illustrate that recurrence and number of behaviours both impact participants' sense of psychological safety.

Behavioural patterns in the cluster solution for the 7, 8, and 9 behaviours sub-sample

As with the frequency of earlier subgroups, excluding and manipulative behaviours were the most commonly experienced. Two thirds of the cases in this sub-sample fell into a single low recurrence low impact cluster (Cluster 1). The highest recurrence in this cluster was 'once or twice' over the prior 12 months. The main intensification compared to earlier sub-samples was in the increased number of behaviours experienced rather than an increase in recurrence of those behaviours.

In contrast, behavioural recurrence ranged widely in Cluster 2 from once or twice to Often or Very often. Cluster 2 experienced significantly higher recurrence for 11 behaviours. Key behaviours that distinguished between the clusters were *Ignored your opinion*, *Excluded you from an email, text conversation, or group media chat in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*, *Undervalued your efforts*, and *Withheld information or resources from you.* However, the pattern of behaviour experience in Cluster 2 mirrored Cluster 1, just at a higher level of recurrence. In this sub-sample sexualised, electronic, violent or ridiculing behaviours were uncommon and did not contribute to significant differences between the two clusters.

Patterns in the 10 to 14 behaviour subgroup

There were 637 survey participants who experienced 10 to 14 behaviours, randomly assigned to an analysis panel (N=346) and a validation panel (N=291). Within this sub-sample all 31 unacceptable behaviours were experienced by one or more participants. Multicollinearity between the behaviours was assessed as minimal[48].

[48] All behaviours were experienced by one or more cases. One pair of behaviours from a possible 465 pairs was correlated higher than 0.5: *Unfairly blamed you for something* and *Undervalued your efforts* were correlated 0.545.

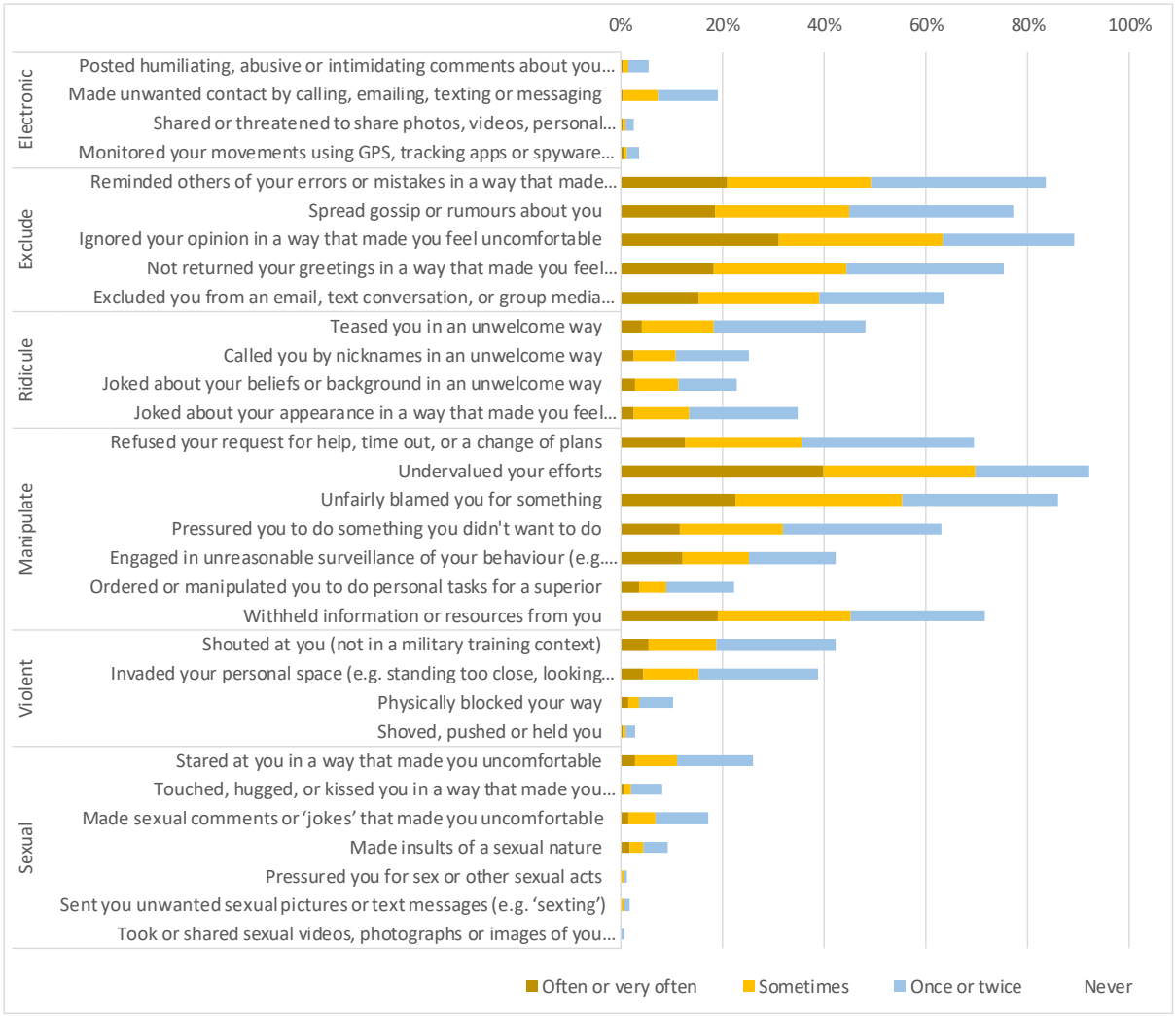


Figure 25. Behaviour frequency – 10 to 14 behaviours sub-sample

Compared to the sample population, proportionally more females experienced 10 to 14 behaviours than males (Women $_{Population}$=29%, Women $_{10\ to\ 14\ behaviours}$=43%; χ^2(df 1, 7603)=65.134, p<0.001, Cramer's V=0.093). This reflects the gendered nature of unacceptable behaviours. In this cluster analysis I expected sexualized behaviours to be a marker for at least one cluster.

Table 11. Female personnel were over-represented in the 10 – 14 behaviours group

	All participants		10s-14s[49]	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	2014	29.0	274	43.0
Male	4928	71.0	342	53.7
X	194	2.5	1	0.2
Gender not declared	172	2.2	20	3.1
Total	7797	100	637	100.0

Compared to the sample population, proportionally more APS experienced 10 to 14 behaviours than in the sub-sample ($APS_{Population}$=28.6%, $APS_{10\ to\ 14\ behaviours}$=35.6%, χ^2(df 4, 7797)=16.786, *p*=0.001, Cramer's V=0.046).

Table 12. APS personnel were over-represented in the 10 – 14 behaviours groups

	All participants		10s-14s[50]	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Navy	1336	17.1	113	17.7
Army	2134	27.4	153	24.0
Air Force	1842	23.6	126	19.8
Defence APS	2231	28.6	227	35.6
ASD Employees	254	3.3	18	2.8
Total	7797	100	637	100.0

Three cluster solution was optimal

Hierarchical clustering indicted a two, three or five cluster solution. I investigated all solutions using K-means cluster analysis. I also investigated a four cluster solution for interest's sake. None of the solutions examined showed sexualized or electronic behaviours to be indicators of a unique pattern of behaviour. The solution that best fit the data was the three cluster solution. Considerations when choosing the cluster solution:

- The four and five cluster solutions identified additional isolate clusters of three or nine cases. They provided some detail about the experience of ridiculing behaviours and

[49] Proportionally more females (14.0% more) and fewer males (17.3% less) were among cases that selected 10s-14s behaviours compared to all other participants included in this study (χ^2(df 1, 7603)=65.134, *p*<0.001, Cramer's V=0.093)

[50] Differences in the proportions of Service membership were significant. Post Hoc tests identified proportionately more APS in the 10s-14s sub group than in the sample as a whole, and fewer Army and Air Force personnel (χ^2(df 4, 7797)=16.786, *p*=0.001, Cramer's V=0.046).

violent behaviours, but did not articulate a unique experience of sexualised behaviours or electronic behaviours.

- The three cluster solution also had a cluster hallmarked by ridiculing behaviours.
- The two cluster solution masked all reference to ridiculing behaviours.

The three cluster solution best presented the major patterns in the data without relying on isolate clusters for detail about ridiculing behaviours. This solution was 83% stable in the hold out panel was 94% stable.

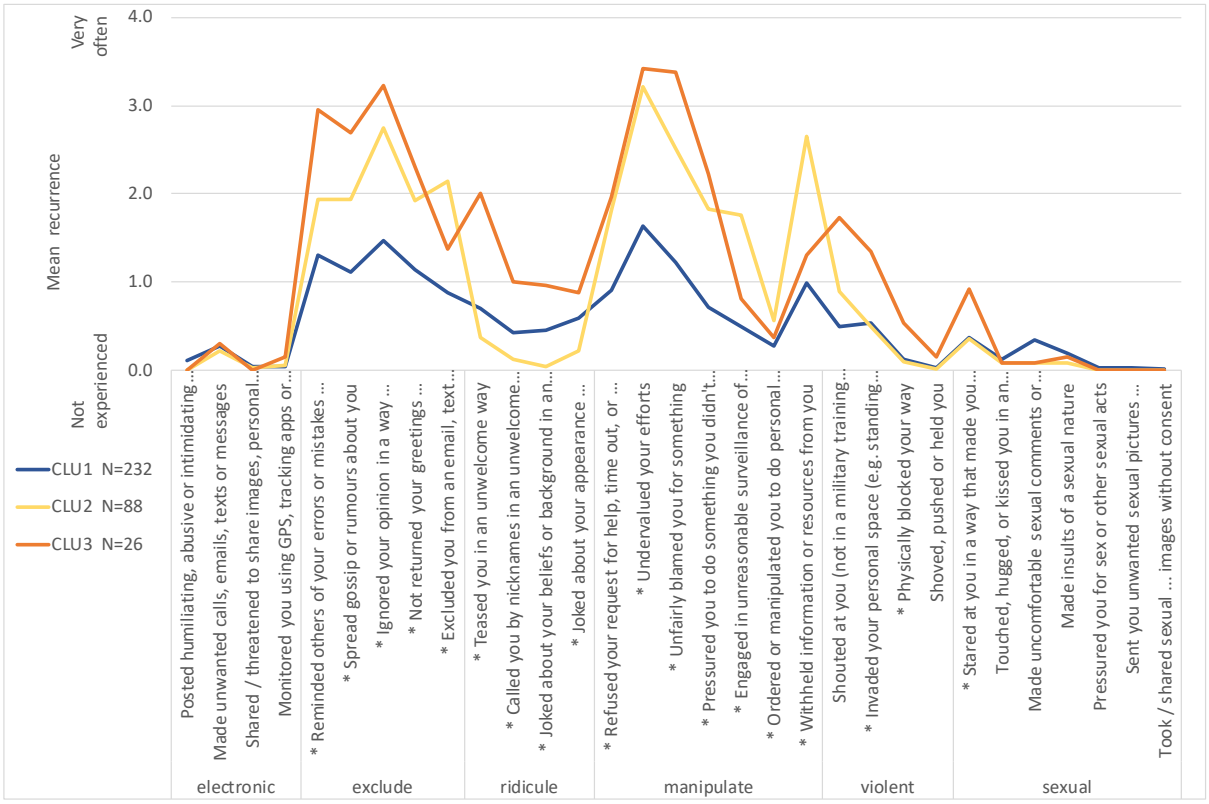


Figure 26. Three cluster solution for the 10 to 14 behaviours sub-sample

The basic pattern is high mean recurrence for excluding and manipulating behaviours, lower mean recurrence for ridicule and violent behaviours, and low mean recurrence for sexualised and electronic behaviours. Nineteen of the 31 behaviours show significant differences in mean recurrence between the clusters as identified by an asterisk in the Figure. For the first time ridiculing, violent behaviours and one sexualised behaviour distinguish between clusters.

Characteristics of the three cluster solution

There are no differences between the three clusters by gender (χ^2=3.873, (df 2), p=0.144).

There were differences in Service composition. Cluster 2 held more APS participants than the other two clusters which were dominated by ADF members (Cluster 1 $_{\text{Service APS}}$=31%, Cluster 2 $_{\text{Service APS}}$ =49%, Cluster 3 $_{\text{Service APS}}$ =27%: χ^2=12.810, (df 6), p=0.046).

There were differences in mean age group between the clusters (Age $_{\text{Cluster 1}}$=5.35, Age $_{\text{Cluster 2}}$=6.06, Age $_{\text{Cluster 3}}$=4.88: F=4.625, (df 2, 334), p=0.01). Cluster 2, with an approximate mean age of 42 years was significantly older than other two clusters (Custer 1 approximate mean age of 38 years, and Cluster 3 approximate mean age of 36 years). This is in keeping with the higher proportion of APS cases, as Defence APS is known to be older on average than ADF members.

Behaviour recurrence was significantly different between all clusters (F=300.125, (df 2, 343), p<0.001). Cluster 1 had the lowest mean recurrence, Cluster 2 was higher, and Cluster 3 was higher still (Cluster 1 $_{\text{Mean recurrence}}$=17.10, Cluster 2 $_{\text{Mean recurrence}}$=28.26, Cluster 3 $_{\text{Mean recurrence}}$=36.38).

The impact of the most serious incident experience was higher for Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 compared to Cluster 1 (Cluster 1 $_{\text{Impact score}}$=11.00, Cluster 2 $_{\text{Impact score}}$=16.29, Cluster 3 $_{\text{Impact score}}$=18.12; F=40.544, (df 2, 319), p<0.001).

The PSC scores ranged from neutral to negative. The PSC score for Cluster 1 was higher than for Cluster 2. Cluster 3 was not significantly different to the other clusters (Cluster 1 $_{\text{PSC}}$=28.31, Cluster 2 $_{\text{PSC}}$=24.36, Cluster 3 $_{\text{PSC}}$=21.73: F=19.995 (df 2, 314) p<0.001).

Behavioural Patterns in the cluster solution

One major feature of the cluster solution is the high and low patterns of the same experiential pattern illustrated by Cluster 1 (low recurrence) and Cluster 3 (high recurrence). This pattern features the same excluding and manipulating behaviours as evidenced in earlier sub-samples, and illustrates two different levels of recurrence for ridiculing behaviours, some violent behaviours, and two sexualised behaviours. Both of these clusters were also dominated by younger ADF personnel.

The other pattern in the cluster solution at first appears only marginally different, but I would argue that it is illustrative of the predominantly APS experience of unacceptable behaviour at

work. There is almost no experience of ridiculing behaviours, violent behaviours or sexualised behaviours.

Once again, excluding behaviours and manipulative behaviours dominate the experience of participants in this sub-sample. With this number of behaviours, the experience of behaviours that illustrate a formal power difference are evidenced along with the other behaviours. For the first time, ridiculing, violent and sexualised behaviours contribute to unique profile of behavioural experience. However, these behaviours are very much embedded with the experience of excluding and manipulative behaviours, rather than being distinct to them.

Patterns in the 15 to 24 behaviours subgroup

There were 344 survey participants who experienced 15 to 24 unacceptable behaviours. All cases were included in the analyses panel. There is no hold out sample for this group. Within this sub-sample all 31 unacceptable behaviours were experienced by one or more participants. Multicollinearity between the behaviours was assessed as minimal[51].

Compared to the sample population, proportionally more females experienced 15-24 behaviours than males ($Women_{Population}$=29%, $Women_{15\ to\ 24\ behaviours}$=38%; χ^2(df 1, 7603)=15.564, p<0.001, Cramer's V=0.045). This reflects the gendered nature of unacceptable behaviours. I anticipated that in this cluster analysis sexualized behaviours would be a marker for at least one cluster.

[51] There were 465 possible pairs of behaviours. 96% of all possible pairs of behaviours are correlated within Sambandam's recommended maximum of .5. Most pairs of variables that showed higher levels of collinearity were marginal, below 0.6 and well within Hair et al.'s high correlation level of .7. One pair of behaviours were correlated .705, *Made insults of a sexual nature* and *Made sexual comments or 'jokes' that made you uncomfortable*. Both of these behaviours were included in the cluster analysis.

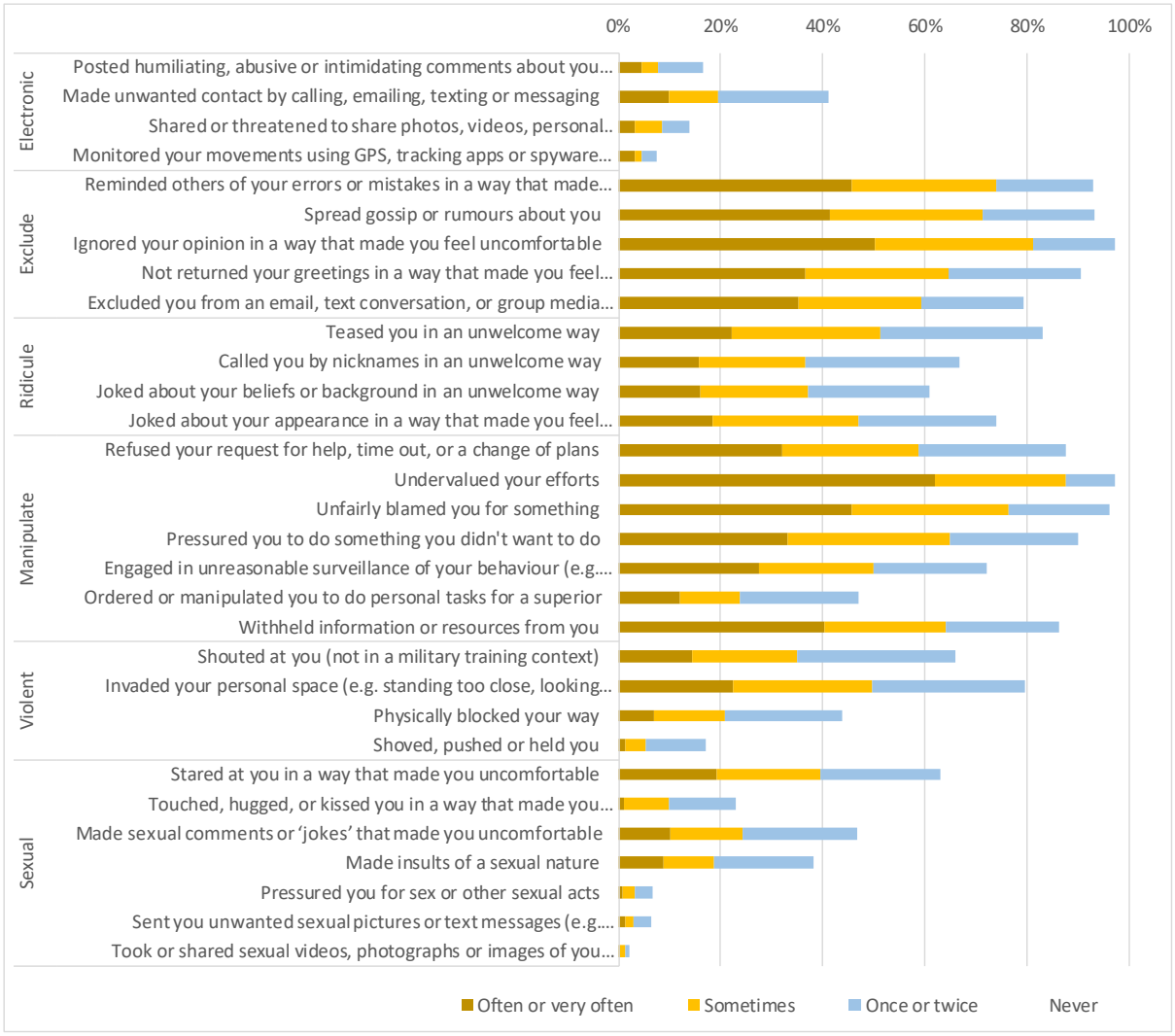


Figure 27. Behaviour frequency – 15 to 24 behaviours sub-sample

Table 13. Female personnel were over-represented in the 15 – 24 behaviours group

	All participants		**15s-24s**[52]	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	2014	29.0	130	37.8
Male	4928	71.0	195	56.7
X	194	2.5	5	1.5
Gender not declared	172	2.2	14	4.1
Total	7797	100.0	344	100.0

[52] This is slightly less of a discrepancy than for 10-14 behaviours sub-sample group (χ^2(df 1, 7603) =15.564, p = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.045)

Compared to the sample population, Navy participants are over-represented in the 15 to 24 behaviours sub-sample (Navy $_{Population}$=17.1% compared to Navy $_{15\ to\ 24\ behaviours}$=23.3%; χ^2(df 4, 7796)=13.199, *p*=0.004, Cramer's V=0.041).

Table 14. Navy personnel were over-represented in the 15-24 behaviours groups

	All participants		15s-24s[53]	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Navy	1336	17.1	80	23.3
Army	2134	27.4	94	27.2
Air Force	1842	23.6	61	17.7
Defence APS	2231	28.6	104	30.1
ASD Employees	254	3.3	5	1.4
Total	7797	100	344	100.0

Five cluster solution was optimal

The agglomeration schedule from the hierarchical cluster analysis indicated a three, five, or seven cluster solution. The possible cluster solutions were investigated using K-means clustering. I investigated all solutions, as well as a 4 cluster solution and a 6 cluster solutions for interest. The best fit for the data was the five cluster solution. Considerations when identifying the best fit to the data were:

- Initially I was going to accept the seven cluster solution because it articulated detail about the elusive sexualised behaviours and electronic behaviours. However, the seven cluster solution was not parsimonious compared to the five cluster solution. Many clusters had similar behaviour profiles at different levels of recurrence and these did not provide new information. The six cluster solution had similar drawbacks.
- The five cluster solution (preferred) showed two clusters reflecting a concentration of ridiculing behaviours rather than three. One cluster expressed the same elevated recurrence of sexualized behaviours as noted in the more complex six and seven cluster solutions. This cluster solution retains detail and maximises parsimony.
- Three and four cluster solutions generated more homogeneous behaviour patterns, but at different levels of recurrence. Fewer clusters led to less detail about ridiculing behaviours.

[53] Differences in proportions of Service membership were significant. Post Hoc tests identified proportionately more Navy in the 15-24 behaviour sub group than in the sample as a whole (6.4% more Navy), and fewer Air Force (6.2% fewer Air Force). Service by Fifteens2019, χ^2 (df 3, 7796) =13.199, p = 0.004, Cramer's V = 0.041).

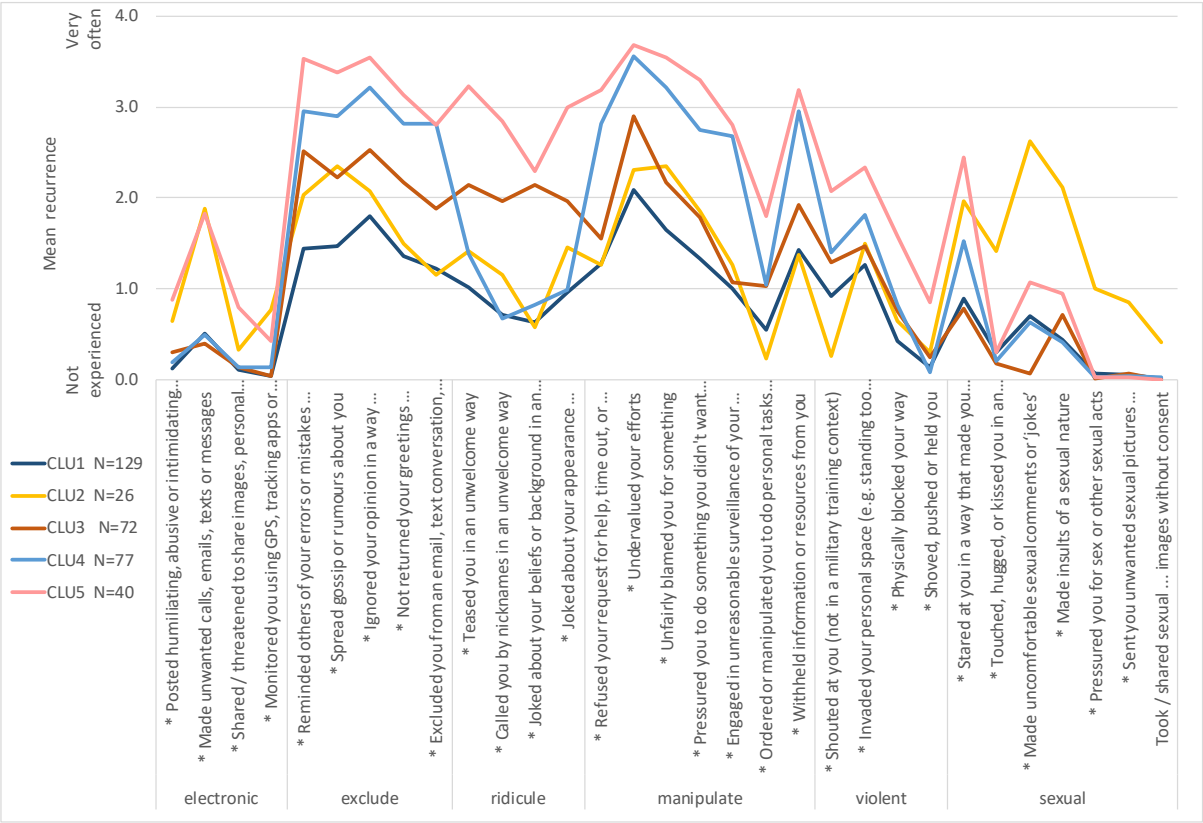


Figure 28. Five Cluster solution for behaviours experienced in the 15-24 behaviours group

Characteristics of the five cluster solution

Demographically, the clusters differed by gender, ADF Service, and age.

Table 15. Differences between clusters in the 15 to 24 behaviours sub-sample 5 cluster solution

	Cluster	Clu 1 N=129	Clu 2 N=26	Clu 3 N=72	Clu 4 N=77	Clu 5 N=40	Total N=344
Gender	Female	43%	81%	11%	42%	35%	38%
	Male	52%	15%	82%	52%	63%	57%
	Non-binary	0%	4%	0%	4%	3%	1%
	Prefer not to say	5%	0%	7%	3%	0%	4%
Service	Navy	22%	35%	25%	16%	30%	23%
	Army	18%	46%	31%	27%	40%	27%
	Air Force	20%	12%	14%	22%	13%	18%
	Defence APS	38%	8%	26%	35%	18%	30%
	ASD APS	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%	1%
Age	Mean 5 year category	5.25	3.81	5.03	5.09	4.28	4.94
	Age equivalent (years)	37 yr	30 yr	36 yr	36.5 yr	32.5 yr	36 yr
Number of Behaviours	Mean	16.6	18.6	18.2	17.6	21.3	17.9
Recurrence	Mean	26.0	41.3	39.2	45.6	64.8	38.8

Most Serious Incident	not selected / selected	9% / 91%	0% / 100%	10% / 90%	4% / 96%	3% / 98%	6% / 94%
Impact of MSI	Mean	12.49	15.2	14.2	18.2	19.6	15.2
PSC	Mean	26.9	28.6	23.1	18.8	17.6	23.53

NOTES to table: results from statistical tests are represented by colour. Details of test results are presented below in text.

	not entered in analysis
	no difference
	more
	less
	middling but significantly different

Recurrence is the sum of 31 non-criminal behaviours. Mean recurrence is the average recurrence for all participants in the cluster

Age was measured in 5-year age brackets. Equivalent age in years are reported to make the results more accessible to readers. The difference between Cluster 5 and the sub-sample overall is not significant due to the range of ages represented in the Cluster. Results for Cluster 5 in the 15-24 behaviours sub-sample are: Mean age group=4.28, with confidence interval 3.60 to 4.95.

Women comprised 81% of Cluster 2, while men comprised 82% of Cluster 3 (χ=44.326, (df 4, 325), p<.001, Cramer's V=0.369). The other three clusters were closer to the sub-sample norm.

Service personnel were concentrated in Cluster 2 (92%) and APS were over represented in Cluster 1 and Cluster 4 (χ=44.326, (df 4, 325), p<.001, Cramer's V=0.369).

Cluster 1 participants were older than participants in other clusters, about 37 years, and Cluster 2 participants were younger, about 30 years (Cluster 1 $_{Age}$=5.25, Cluster 2 $_{Age}$=3.81; F=3.722, (df 4, 330), p=0.006).

Behavioural recurrence varied widely. Recurrence was highest for Cluster 5 and lowest for Cluster 1 (Cluster 1 $_{Behaviour\ recurrence}$=26.0, Cluster 5 $_{Behaviour\ recurrence}$=64.8; F=308.247, (df 4, 339), p<.001).

The impact of the most serious incident was highest for Cluster 4 and Cluster 5, and lowest for Cluster 1 and Cluster 3 (F=20.995, (df 4, 307), p<.001).

PSC scores ranged from neutral to negative (F=15.731, (df 4, 304), p<.001). Post hoc tests showed that PSC scores were lowest for Cluster 4 and Cluster 5, similar to each other and significantly different to the other three clusters. PSC scores were highest for Cluster 1 and Cluster 2, which were similar to each other and significantly different to the other three clusters.

Behavioural patterns in the cluster solution

As with the cluster solutions from the other sub-samples, the dominant pattern of excluding and manipulating behaviours is present in all the clusters. However, this sub-sample illustrates different patterns of experience associated with other behaviours;

- The experience of ridiculing behaviours distinguishes two clusters; Cluster 3 and Cluster 5.
- The experience of sexualised behaviours distinguishes Cluster 2 from other clusters.
- The experience of electronic behaviours is associated with both sexualised behaviours in Cluster 2 and ridicule in Cluster 5.
- Violent behaviours appear to be associated with all other behaviours at different levels of recurrence.

Combined with the demographic differences, the five clusters can be profiled in the following way:

- Cluster 1 was dominated by older APS participants. This group experienced malicious gossip, excluding behaviours, being undervalued and other devaluing behaviours. They rarely experienced ridiculing or violent behaviours and sexualised or electronic behaviours were even less frequent. In this pattern, cluster one expressed the dominant pattern of behavioural experience in the entire sample population. They experienced the least number of behaviours in the sub-sample and the lowest recurrence of behaviours. Cluster 1 also experienced the lowest level of negative impact in the sub-sample, which is in keeping with their lower number of behaviours and the lower level of recurrence of those behaviours.
- Cluster 2 were younger female participants, mostly Service women. While they experienced excluding and manipulating behaviours, they also experienced the most sexualised behaviours. Interestingly, they experienced comparatively little ridicule or violent behaviours. This is counter intuitive as sexual harassment is often known to be passed off as a joke, however it may reflect the fact that the sexualised behaviours presented to participants included *Made uncomfortable sexual comments or 'jokes'*, so that participants did not need to use the non-sexualised ridiculing items to identify this aspect of their experience.

The experience of electronic behaviours is also a feature of the behavioural profile of Cluster 2. It indicates that sexualised behaviours co-occur with electronic behaviours. This is the only time in this series of analyses that sexualized behaviours cluster together, in particular with respect to *Made unwanted calls, emails texts or message*. Further, the

combination of sexualised behaviours with behaviours that were not explicitly sexualised (*Made unwanted contact by calling emailing or testing*, *Pressured you to do something you did not want to do*, and *Invaded your personal space*) indicate how non-sexualised behaviours can support and enable sexual misconduct. The results suggest that sexual misconduct occurs within a network of non-sexualised behaviours. However, the impact of these behaviours is significantly less than for clusters with higher mean recurrence (specifically, Cluster 5).

- Cluster 3 was dominated by men, both Service personnel and APS personnel. This group of men were subject to an array of undermining and ridiculing behaviours at a 'sometimes' level of recurrence. Sexualised and electronic behaviours were not part of the behavioural profile for this cluster. The mean impact of these experiences was significantly less than for Cluster 2, indicating that at similar levels of recurrence, experiences dominated by ridiculing behaviours may be less damaging than experiences dominated by sexualised and electronic behaviours.

The results for Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 demonstrate gendered patterns of experience at the most extreme examples of unacceptable behaviour in the sample population.

- Cluster 4 is a higher recurrence version of the pattern in Cluster 1 and like Cluster 1 also had a higher than average proportion of APS personnel. Interestingly, Cluster 4 had one of the highest impact scores and lowest PSC scores in the sub-sample indicating that these participants were particularly negatively affected by their experiences even though they rarely experienced ridiculing, sexualised or electronic behaviours.

The results for Cluster 4 indicate that commonly experienced excluding and manipulative behaviours are equally damaging to targets as behaviours that are often considered 'worse' such as ridicule, violent or sexualised behaviours. The implication of this observation is that there is no simple continuum of unacceptable behaviours from mild to severe impact.

- Apart from proportionally more Army participants, Cluster 5 had no defining demographic characteristics. However, Cluster 5 had the highest number of behaviours experienced and the highest recurrence of those behaviours. These participants also had the highest impact scores and the lowest PSC scores for the sub-sample. The behavioural pattern was the same as Cluster 3 but at a much higher

recurrence. Key behavioural differences was the recurrence of *Made unwanted calls, emails, tests or messages*, *stared at you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*, and the high recurrence of all ridiculing behaviours coupled with the high to very high recurrence of excluding and manipulating behaviours.

Cluster 5, is a high recurrence cluster that follows the same behaviour pattern of Cluster 3. Cluster 5 illustrates that number of behaviours and recurrence of behaviours are the primary drivers of harm, not necessarily type of behaviour.

Stability and validity of the cluster solutions

The cluster analysis solutions were tested for stability and the hold out samples were analysed for validation of the preferred solution following the procedures outlined by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (Hair, Black, et al., 2019, pp. 228, 248-249, 254). In K-means cluster analysis the stability of a cluster solution can be assessed by using alternate seed points to start the clustering. A stable cluster solution will result in most cases being allocated to the same cluster regardless of the seed points.

The validity of the preferred cluster solution was assessed through confirmatory cluster analyses undertaken on the hold out sample. The analysis and validation panels were equivalent for demographics, number of behaviours selected and which behaviours were selected (i.e., the same variate was present in both analysis and hold-out sub-samples). Using hierarchical cluster analysis, I tested if the same cluster solution(s) were evidenced in the agglomeration schedule. Using K-means cluster analysis I tested if the preferred number of clusters produced a stable result. I also examined if the preferred cluster solution resulted in the same (or very similar) behaviour profile for the individual clusters. Further details of this work can be found in Annex 5. Table 16 below summarises the stability and validity analyses.

Table 16. Stability and validation of the cluster solutions

Sub-sample	*Outcome*
Pairs of behaviours	Preferred four cluster solution was stable (92%) in the analysis sub- sample The four cluster solution not replicated and unstable (57%) in the hold out sample
3 or 4 behaviours	The two cluster solution was stable (100%) in the analysis sub-sample. The two cluster solution was replicated and stable (100%) in the hold out sample
5 or 6 behaviours	Preferred four cluster solution was unstable (68%) in the analysis sample The four cluster solution was replicated and somewhat stable (76%) in the hold out sample
7, 8 or 9 behaviours	Preferred two cluster solution was stable (100%) in the analysis sample. The two cluster solution was replicated and stable (100%) in the hold out sample
10 to 14 behaviours	Preferred three cluster solution was stable (83%) in the analysis sub-sample The three cluster solution was replicated and stable (93%) in the hold out sample
14 to 24 behaviours	Preferred five cluster solution was unstable (65%) in the analysis sub-sample. The four and three cluster solution were also unstable (71% and 74% respectively). There was no hold out sample for this sub-sample

What are the implications of instability in the cluster analyses?

Instability was evident in the pairs sub-sample, the 5 or 6 behaviours sub-sample, and in the 15-24 behaviours sub-sample. I speculated about the causes of instability at each point, and these speculations may have some merit. Instability could be caused by

- Too few behaviours experienced by each participant in the cluster analysis, such as the pairs of behaviours sub-group. That is, clusters could form around different individual behaviours with only a few changes in behaviours experienced.
- Too similar an array of behaviours selected, such that cases have a high degree of inter-changeability. This could explain the instability in the five and six behaviours sub-group where all behaviours with meaningful differences between clusters were excluding or manipulative behaviours. Electronic, sexualised, ridiculing, and violent behaviours were rarely experienced in this sub-sample.
- Too wide an array of numbers of behaviours experienced in the sub-sample, such as the 15 to 24 behaviours sub-group.

The existence of instability at all three points indicate that the experiences of unacceptable behaviours are in fact very similar. There is a shared level of common experiences among all participants so that cluster identification is based on relatively small differences between cases. In addition, common behaviours can co-occur in conjunction with an array of possible behaviours that are less commonly experienced apparently in a random way. This results in pockets of instability in the cluster analyses. This could also explain why sexualised behaviours did not define any clusters in the expected manner in sub-samples with less than 15 behaviours.

I conclude that the results of these cluster analyses are *examples* of a possible range of common behavioural experience patterns in the data set. The dominance of excluding and manipulating behaviours may be a feature of this sample from Defence. A different organisation, or the same organisation at a different time, may have very different patterns of behavioural co-occurrence. However, the existence of behavioural co-occurrence across a wide array of different types of unacceptable behaviour is well demonstrated in the cluster analyses.

7.7 Discussion and Implications

This study explored how diverse constructs of interpersonal mistreatment may be experienced together in the workplace. In this involved data from 31 behavioural items from the Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS) that were drawn from published scales of bullying, sexual harassment, and cyber bullying scales as well as the scale items identified in Study 1. These items were presented to survey participants using block randomisation informed by behavioural tactics identified in Study 1. The WBS behavioural item blocks were determined by the tactic that most distinguished the item from other behaviours. Seven of these behavioural items are sexualised behaviours. Four are behaviours actioned using electronic medium. The other 20 behaviours are examples of manipulation, exclusion, violence, and ridicule.

When entered into a cluster analysis, this array of behaviours enabled the behavioural experience of each participant to be clustered with others whose experiences were most similar to them. In this fashion the cluster analysis solutions were not limited by a priori construct definitions. The findings indicated an array of experiences common to all targets of

interpersonal mistreatment. Here I summarise and discuss the findings and consider the implications of these findings.

A brief summary of cluster analysis results

A brief summary of the cluster solutions for each sub-sample is provided here.

Pairs of behaviours sub-group, four cluster solution: There were no demographic differences between the clusters. The level of mean recurrence is low (less than once or twice) for all clusters. Clusters were identified by single excluding, manipulating, and violent behaviours. The experience of ridicule, sexualized, and electronic behaviours were comparatively rare and distributed among the four clusters.

Three or four behaviours sub-sample, two cluster solution: There were no demographic differences between the clusters. Clusters were identified by differing recurrence on one manipulating behaviour *Undervalued your efforts*. The experience of exclusion, ridicule, violent behaviours, sexualized, and electronic behaviours were distributed and did not identify either cluster.

Five or six behaviours sub-sample, four cluster solution: There were no demographic differences between the clusters. Clusters were identified by differing recurrence on ten excluding or manipulative behaviours. The experience of ridicule, violent, sexualized, and electronic behaviours were distributed and did not identify any clusters.

Seven, eight or nine behaviours sub-sample, two cluster solution: Clusters differed by age. The older cluster was also characterised higher recurrence of behaviours, higher impact and lower PSC scores. Clusters were identified by differing recurrence on eleven of the excluding and manipulative behaviours, and to a lesser extent ridicule *Teased you in an unwelcome way*, and physically violent behaviour *Invaded your personal space*. The experience of other behaviours including sexualized and electronic behaviours were distributed and did not identify either cluster.

Ten to fourteen behaviours, three cluster solution: Clusters differed by Service and age. The eldest cluster was disproportionately APS employees. They were characterised by medium recurrence of behaviours, high impact and low PSC scores. Clusters were identified by differing recurrence on all twelve excluding or manipulative behaviours, all four ridiculing

behaviours, most violent behaviours, and sexualised *Stared at you in a way that made you uncomfortable*. The experience of other sexualised and electronic behaviours did not identify any cluster.

15 to 24 behaviours sub-group, five cluster solution: Clusters differed by gender, Service, and age.

- The eldest cluster was disproportionately APS employees. They were characterised by medium recurrence of behaviours and medium impact scores.[54] The youngest cluster was disproportionately female. They were characterised by high recurrence of behaviours, medium impact scores, and sexualised behaviours.
- One cluster was disproportionately male. They were characterised by high recurrence of behaviours, medium impact scores and high levels of ridicule. This cluster experienced the least sexualised behaviours in the sub-sample.
- The highest recurrence cluster was mostly ADF personnel (83%), male and female. They were characterised by very high recurrence of excluding, ridiculing and manipulative behaviours, and high recurrence of some physically aggressive and sexualised behaviours. These participants had the highest mean impact and lowest PSC scores.

The cluster solution for this sub-sample exhibited both the dominant underlying pattern of excluding and manipulative behaviours, and cluster differentiation based on behavioural recurrence. In addition, some clusters were marked by sexualised, ridicule and violent behaviours.

Underlying pattern of behavioural co-occurrence

All cluster solutions following a dominant pattern of behavioural co-occurrence

- Excluding behaviours and manipulating behaviours were experienced by all participants.
- Within all sub-samples, clusters most often distinguished by different recurrence levels excluding and manipulative behaviours.
- In sub-samples with fewer than four behaviours experienced, individual behaviours that indicate a formal power difference distinguished between clusters.

[54] Mean recurrence for all clusters was high compared to the population sample as a whole. However, within the sub-sample scores varied significantly. Similarly impact and PSC scores were most extreme in this sub-sample.

- Within all the sub-samples, electronic, sexualised, ridiculing and physically aggressive behaviours were distributed between clusters and rarely differentiated clusters in the cluster solution.
- Ridicule and physically aggressive behaviours became more prominent as more behaviours were experienced and at higher levels of recurrence, possibly indicating that these behaviours demonstrate an intensification of the mistreatment.
- In the most extreme cases (participants who experienced 15 to 24 behaviours), differences in the experience of electronic, sexualised, ridiculing and physically aggressive behaviours varied significantly between clusters, revealing a unique pattern of co-occurrent experiences for that cluster.

The predominant pattern of excluding and manipulating behaviours may be a feature of this sample from Defence. A different organisation, or the same organisation at a different time, may yield different patterns of behavioural co-occurrence.

Little evidence for different constructs of unacceptable behaviour

There was very little evidence for unique patterns of behaviour that could be recognised as abusive supervision, cyber bullying, sexual misconduct, or even ostracism. While excluding behaviours clustered together, which indicates that ostracism may be experienced independently to other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, they also *always* co-occurred with manipulating behaviours. These two tactics – exclusion and manipulation – were the dominant pattern of behaviour experiences in the data set.

There was one exception, Cluster 2 in the pairs of behaviour sub-sample. In this one cluster the majority of participants experienced *Ignored your opinion in a way that made you feel uncomfortable* and *Not returned your greetings in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*, which are both items evident in the workplace ostracism scale. However, this excluding pattern of co-occurrence was not evident when more behaviours were experienced. Overall, the findings illustrate that excluding behaviours do not occur independently to manipulating behaviours. This finding further indicates that the construct of ostracism may be overly focused on passive excluding behaviours.

In addition, clusters of behavioural experience that signify a unique pattern of experience for sexual misconduct, cyber-bullying, and/or abusive supervision were not evident in the cluster analysis results. Behaviours signifying these constructs co-occurred with exclusion and

manipulation as well with the full range of other behaviours. Among participants who experienced between 2 and14 behaviours, the major difference between clusters was the level of recurrence rather than combinations of behavioural experience. The exception to this finding was in the most extreme experiences of interpersonal mistreatment in the 15 to 24 behaviours sub-sample. Among these participants, cluster 2 and cluster 3 which were differentiated in the cluster solution by gender, age, ADF service, and the experience of sexualised behaviours (cluster 2) and ridiculing behaviours (cluster 3).

Co-occurrence: time, sequencing, instigators

In this research, co-occurrence is operationalised as all the behaviours experienced by participants within the survey recall period. This is no different to the operationalisation used in survey instruments of single constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. For example, experiences of workplace ostracism items may occur together in one day, or over the recall period of 12 months in an unknown way. Nonetheless, the pattern of those experiences, the way the behaviours co-occurred, does not bring into question whether the participant experienced ostracism or not. Due to the broad range of constructs represented in the WBS, the sequencing and timing of behavioural experiences may provide vital information about one or all of these constructs.

In the light of Study 2 results the concept of co-occurrence needs reflection. Co-occurrence means that two behaviours occurred together. But 'together' in what sense? The recall period for the WBS was 12 months. However, the data is cross-sectional, recalled at the time of answering the survey. Data about the sequencing of events and the time between experiences of the behavioural items was not recorded.

Consequently, questions about which behaviours were experienced, in what sequence they were enacted, and who the instigator was may be the very data that demonstrates these constructs are materially different to each other. For example, one instigator may primarily engage in cyber bullying, while another may primarily use physically intimidating tactics. If this is the case, then co-occurrence is closely related to the number and propensity of instigators. Alternatively, the temporal pattern of when different behaviours were experienced may illustrate an intensification of mistreatment through behaviours, tactics and recurrence. Alternatively again, there may be patterns due to other influences, such as an instigator's focus on one person waning or sharpening, or an intervention or policy change.

The cross-sectional nature of this research limits what can be known about behavioural co-occurrence. Alternative methodologies are needed to explore and document how co-occurrence manifests for targets of interpersonal mistreatment. For example, longitudinal research could investigate the development of mistreatment over time, the role of multiple instigators, and the hall marks of intensification or de-escalation on the experience of interpersonal mistreatment.

Implications for sexual misconduct | sexual harassment measures

Considering the results from the set of six cluster analyses as a whole, the findings challenge some pre-conceptions about sexualised behaviour being unique to other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

- Sexualised behaviours were experienced in all sub-samples but did not define any cluster, with the exception of Cluster 2 in the 15 to 24 behaviour sub-sample.
- Sexualised behaviours co-occurred interwoven with a wide array of non-sexualised behaviours across the different cluster analyses. Where less than 15 behaviours were experienced, there is no unique pattern of behavioural experience that accompanies sexualised behaviours.
- Sexualised behaviours are most evident at very high levels of unacceptable behaviour experience.
- Gendered experience of unacceptable behaviour was not a feature in most of the cluster solutions. Indicating that, while women are targeted more frequently than men, men who are targets experience interpersonal mistreatment in a similar way to women.
- The exception in this data set is Womens' and mens' unique patterns of experience of unacceptable behaviours evident in cluster 2 and cluster 3 of the 15 to 24 behaviour sub-sample.
- Where sexualized misconduct was identified as a unique pattern of experience, the clusters had significantly lower impact scores than two other clusters which experienced higher behavioural recurrence but did not share the same experiences of sexualised behaviours. This indicates that other experiences can be more harmful than sexualised behaviours.

Sexualised behaviours inter-twined with non-sexualised behaviours

Considering the set of results from the six cluster analyses:

- Sexualised behaviours were experienced in all sub-samples, from one behaviour to 24 behaviours.
- There was no unique pattern of non-sexualised behaviour experiences related to sexual misconduct.

An unexpected finding was that clusters that highlight sexualised behaviours did not readily occur. This was an unexpected result. It was predicted that sexual experiences and non-sexual experiences were conceptually and experientially different to each other, and this would be reflected in clusters that grouped sexualised experiences together. However, results from the first five cluster analyses demonstrate that the experience of sexualised behaviours were distributed across clusters. This indicates that sexualised behaviours co-occur with non-sexualised behaviours with as much variability as all other behaviours.

The cluster analysis results challenge pre-conceptions that sexualised behaviours[55] are unrelated to other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Consider more closely the participants who experienced 15 to 24 behaviours. These participants experienced very high numbers of unacceptable behaviours at high to very high levels of recurrence. In this sub-sample, one cluster (Cluster 2) was mostly women (81%) and nearly all of them (96%) experienced sexualised behaviours. This result illustrates that some cohorts do share a sexual misconduct behaviour profile, and that profile includes a wide array of non-sexualised behaviours. Further, participants in other clusters also experienced sexualised behaviours but these experiences were integrated with an array of other behaviours. The findings illustrate that experiences of sexualised behaviours can be either integrated or follow a unique pattern for cohorts of people who experience high levels of interpersonal mistreatment.

For Cluster 2, where sexualized misconduct was identified as a unique pattern, it had significantly lower impact scores than two other clusters that did not share the same experiences of sexualised behaviours (Cluster 2 $_{\text{Impact scale score}}$=15.2, compared to Cluster 4 $_{\text{Impact scale score}}$=18.2 and Cluster 5 $_{\text{Impact scale score}}$=19.6, F=20.995, (df 4, 307), p<.001.

These results lead us to consider the relationship between sexualised and non-sexualised unacceptable behaviours. It is possible that the expression of non-sexualised unacceptable

[55] For the purpose of this argument the focus will be on sexualised behaviours rather than on both sexualised and electronic behaviours. However, a parallel argument could be made for technology facilitated interpersonal mistreatment.

behaviours support the development and expression of sexual misconduct, at least in the organisational context of the Australian Department of Defence. These results are consistent with Lim and Cortina (2005) who found that sexualised behaviours co-occurred with incivility, but the reverse was not true. While 47 per cent of their participants experienced sexualised behaviours, nearly all of these participants also experienced incivility. A further 23 per cent of their participants experienced only incivility without any sexualised behaviours. Lim and Cortina concluded that these behaviours tended to co-occur in organisations and that sexual harassment should be researched as an experience embedded in a larger context of disrespect (Lim & Cortina, 2005, p. 490).

Furthermore, in this sub population of one organisation many other experiences of unacceptable behaviour co-occurred with sexualised behaviours before sexualised behaviours clustered into an identifiable pattern. One implication is that sexualised behaviours are a late indicator of unacceptable behaviour generally. Another implication is that, in this organisational context, non-sexualised behaviours can have greater negative impact to target individuals than sexualised behaviours. A further concern is that when we measure one construct of unacceptable behaviour independently to others there is a strong likelihood of misattributing harm from a wide array of experiences to the measured construct.

In summary, sexualised behaviours do not happen in isolation and should be considered in conjunction with other unacceptable behaviours. By implication, an intervention that focuses on minimising sexual misconduct may inadvertently allow or excuse the harm caused by non-sexualised behaviours.

Implications of instability in the cluster analyses

In the cluster analysis process cases are joined together to form groups of cases with similar patterns of experience. Stability in a cluster analysis is when the same cases cluster together after the researcher shuffles the order of the cases. This is a test of how different the clusters are to each other in the cluster solution. Instability is an indication that the clusters are not so different, that cases in one cluster could easily belong to another cluster.

The existence of instability in the cluster analyses for the pairs, 5 and 6, and 15 to 24 behaviours sub-groups indicate that the behavioural experiences as a whole are more similar to each other than distinct and separate patterns of experience.

The commonly experienced behaviours generated the basic shape in the data set – high levels of excluding and manipulating experiences and relatively fewer experiences of other behaviours. The less frequently experienced behaviours could be experienced in a wide array of patterns (mixture of behaviours and recurrence) across the dataset. These patterns were not consistent enough to form stable clusters. One example is how sexualised behaviours did not define any clusters as expected. The experience of sexualised behaviours co-occurred inter-twined with many behaviours and in an irregular way.

Core interpersonal mistreatment behaviours

The cluster analysis findings suggest new ideas about commonly experienced behaviours. In this sample population, manipulative and excluding behaviours are core to all cluster solutions. A key difference, and often the only difference, between clusters is the recurrence of these behaviours:

1. *Undervalued your efforts* is the single most commonly experienced behaviour in all sub-samples. Being undervalued can be intentional tactic or an unintentional habit in the workplace. Regardless, consistently being undervalued is dispiriting.
2. *Ignored your opinion in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*
3. *Unfairly blamed you for something*
4. *Reminded others of your errors of mistakes*
5. Three different behaviours edged into fifth spot:
   Withheld information or resources from you, *Spread gossip or rumours about you*, and *Not returned your greetings in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*.

These behaviours could be attributed to a wide array of different constructs of unacceptable behaviour in Defence, including harassment, abuse of power, bullying, and discrimination. The results suggest there is a core experience of exclusion, disrespect, manipulation, and abuse of power across all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Further, I suggest that these behaviours can be largely hidden, being verbal or acts of omission, which makes them difficult to identify and keep a record of. These behaviours can range from being merely uncivil to intense experiences of bullying and abuse of power.

I propose that these behaviours set a foundation for other abuse, and enable other actors to engage in them more freely. Expressions of ridicule, physically aggressive behaviours, sexualised and electronic behaviours are more easily identified as unacceptable and less

likely to be tolerated unless the workplace culture is tolerant and normalises exclusion and manipulation.

7.8 Limitations of the cluster analysis

The following limitations of this study may affect the findings and the generalisability of the findings.

1. The Workplace Behaviours Survey was designed to address an organisational need in the Australian Department of Defence to assess multiple types of unacceptable behaviour in one measure. Defence is a large organisation with diverse occupational specialities and a strong training culture. This could impact the generalisability of findings from these analyses to other organisations.
2. The combination of behaviours listed in the WBS has not been attempted in other organisational surveys. Further, some of the more ambiguous items needed to be clarified for the Defence context. For example, 'Shouted at you' became 'Shouted at you (not in a Defence training context)' because being shouted at is a normal part of some Defence training contexts. Another example is adding a suffix, '…in a way that made you feel uncomfortable', to remove some of the ambiguity of some behaviours identified in the trial phase. In this way 'Stared at you' became 'Stared at you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable'. Consequently, the final collection of 31 behaviours listed in the WBS may not be transferable to other contexts and may be improved upon in the course of future research. However, the WBS design illustrates that a behavioural measure of multiple constructs of unacceptable behaviour is possible and provides a unique perspective on how unacceptable behaviours are experienced and co-occur in an organisation.
3. In a similar manner to factor analysis, cluster analysis involves researcher interpretation and judgement about the preferred solution. Therefore, another researcher, having followed the same procedures on the same data set, may come to different conclusions about the patterns in the data. Cluster analysis has been criticised for being descriptive and non-inferential (Hair, Black, et al., 2019). However, these characteristics are what make cluster analysis well suited to exploratory research. This research is concerned with identifying co-occurrence of different unacceptable behaviours, not about causality of why those behaviours occur.

Further, in practice the researcher must follow a clear process to maximise parsimony, demonstrate stability and replicability of the preferred cluster solution.

4. The WBS is designed to measure different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment with a single behavioural index. Within that, there is an assumption that the selected behaviours adequately represent the array of behaviours used to measure the constructs that contributed scale items. Other researchers may have theoretical or practical grounds to refute or challenge the process followed here. This concern was addressed in part by utilising the findings about behavioural tactics to help group and refine the item list. I suggest that the array of behaviours is suitably diverse and represent at least five main behavioural types: electronic harassing behaviours, excluding behaviours, manipulative behaviours, physically aggressive behaviours, and sexualised behaviours. Nonetheless, the list of unacceptable behaviours could be improved so that (i) there are equal numbers of behaviours in each tactic, (ii) the 'other behaviour' text data could inform the design of a future behaviour inventory, (iii) investigate the possible effects of block randomisation on response patterns.
5. The analyses do not reflect single incident high impact experiences that can be devastating to individuals and reputationally damaging to Defence. Therefore, I cannot comment on the existence of such incidences, or how they may be hidden in the data. This is an area for future research
6. The concept of co-occurrence is determined by the survey recall period, and this has implications for the interpretation of 'co-occurrence'. These data were drawn from a recall period of 12 months. During that time co-occurrence includes behaviours literally occurring together or sequentially. Further, the sequencing of behavioural experience could be temporally very close, such as on the same day, or a longer time between experiences, such as months apart. While this is an issue for all such measures, as this study combines disparate types of interpersonal misconduct, it may have different significance. For example, if sexualised behaviours are experienced in a group at one point in time, and other types of behaviours experienced in a group at another point in time. Such a situation would establish the two different sets of experiences as distinct constructs despite them being experienced by the same person during the recall period. This is another area for future research to explore.
7. The cross-sectional nature of this research limits what can be known about behavioural co-occurrence. Alternative methodologies are needed to explore and document how co-occurrence manifests for targets of interpersonal mistreatment. For example, longitudinal research could investigate the development of mistreatment

over time, the role of multiple instigators, and the hall marks of intensification or de-escalation on the experience of interpersonal mistreatment.

Despite these limitations I hope that the method and the results presented here encourage researchers to take a fresh look at the assumptions built into how we think about and collect data on unacceptable behaviour / interpersonal mistreatment.

7.9 Study 2 Summary

The cluster analysis results suggest there is a core experience of interpersonal mistreatment that involves excluding and manipulating behaviours. The core behaviours are;

- *Undervalued your efforts*,
- *Ignored your opinion in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*,
- *Unfairly blamed you for something*,
- *Reminded others of your errors of mistakes*,
- *Withheld information or resources from you*,
- *Spread gossip or rumours about you*, and
- *Not returned your greetings in a way that made you feel uncomfortable*.

These behaviours could be attributed to a wide array of different constructs of unacceptable behaviour in Defence, including harassment, abuse of power, bullying, and discrimination. That is, they can be covertly enacted. Should they be sexualised by the instigator, then they can also contribute to sexual harassment.

I suggest that these behaviours can be largely verbal or acts of omission, which makes them difficult to keep a record of. Further these core or central experiences are readily be enacted using work processes and norms. The combination of being enacted using 'business as usual' structures and not being recorded makes these behaviours powerful instruments of control and open to abuse. They can range from being merely uncivil to intense experiences of bullying and abuse of power. These behaviours may be the foundation of all constructs of unacceptable behaviour in Defence. Further research is needed to see if these results are sustained in Defence over time and in other organisational contexts.

The evidence of instability in three of the sub-groups lends further weight to the idea of a core set of behaviours. Stability in a cluster analysis is when the same cases cluster together even when the cases are entered in a different order. Instability is an indication that the clusters are not so different, that cases in one cluster could easily belong to another cluster. The existence of instability in the cluster analyses at low, medium, and high levels of experience indicates that the behavioural experiences as a whole are more similar to each other rather than distinct and separate patterns of experience. The core behaviours are the basis of the structure in the data set – high levels of excluding and manipulating behaviours and lower levels of other behaviours. The less commonly experienced behaviours distributed across clusters in the cluster solutions so that they rarely distinguished between clusters.

One of the surprising findings was that sexualised behaviours did not cluster together, indicating that these experiences did not have a unique pattern of co-occurrence with non-sexualised behaviours. That is, the experience of sexualised behaviours were distributed across clusters in each sub-sample. That is, they co-occurred with many non-sexualised behaviours in random ways. This result challenges us to think broadly about the context in which sexual mistreatment occurs and poses the question of whether interventions overly focused on one type of mistreatment might actually be counter productive.

The next section of the thesis will draw on the two studies and highlight theoretical and practical implications from the results.

8 Discussion and implications

This thesis is concerned with exploring what is shared between different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. It was initially inspired by Hershcovis' (2011) call to reconcile construct proliferation and short comings in the way construct definitions were operationalised. Two studies explored the basis of construct proliferation and potential commonality; One a latent thematic document analysis of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of similar constructs, the second, a cluster analysis of behaviour item data drawn from the measures of diverse constructs. Here I discuss key findings from these studies and consider the implications of the research as a whole, that is their commonalities, tactics, and experienced co-occurrence.

8.1 Finding: Commonality among constructs

Study 1 involved a latent thematic document analysis of four constructs; abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000), workplace bullying (Einarsen et al., 2009), incivility (Cortina et al., 2001), and workplace ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008) to explore their similarities and uniqueness. The findings indicate three broad areas of commonality; acknowledged commonality, demonstrated relationships between the constructs, and shared latent positions.

Acknowledged commonalities

Acknowledged commonalities are positions that were openly discussed by the authors as relevant to their construct. Overt commonalities include the instigators' use of power, the targets' experience of harm, instigators' intent, and a commitment to statistical validation of a behavioural item scale being proof of a distinct construct.

- Of central importance is the instigators' power over the target. The power difference can be structural or it can evolve over time. It is the abuse of the instigators' power that makes it difficult for the target to counteract or otherwise protect themselves from the interpersonal mistreatment.
- The principle that harm to the target accumulates over time from exposure to mistreatment behaviours is discussed in the papers. Increased exposure to

mistreatment behaviours is closely correlated with indicators of harm to the target In the interpersonal mistreatment literatures, harm from the behavioural items is inferred from the correlation between the behavioural scale score and generalised measures of impact such as intention to leave, psychological distress, or job dissatisfaction. This situation was also reflected in the findings of the cluster analysis (Study 2), where increased impact scores and decreased psychosocial safety scores were highly correlated with increased number of behaviours and increased recurrence of behaviours.[56]

- This is a grey area around the importance of instigators' intent to cause harm to the construct definitions. The emphasis placed on the instigators' intent to harm varies in the conceptualisation of different constructs in Study 1. However, they all encompass harmful acts that are intentional, have ambiguous intent, or can be unintentional. A clear statement in the definition one way or the other is subsequently altered in discussion to include both intended and unintended harm. Consequently, intention is not definitive and only partially explanatory for the constructs included in the study.
- Finally, the commitment to behavioural item measures and statistical validation is integral to the operationalisation of the construct definitions. Concomitant with this is the use of shared and similar behavioural items in the respective measurement scales, and the use of very similar nomological nets to validate the operationalised constructs.

These commonalities between the four papers in Study 1 are also sources of limitations identified in the literature. For example; (1) the focus on cumulative harm is at the expense of identifying the way that less frequent high impact behaviours interact with more repetitive behaviours, which are not integrated in the construct conceptualisations or operationalisation. (2) An orientation toward frequency of behavoiurs and their correlation with harm gives rise to two problems. Firstly, it results in the authors not engaging with less frequent but no less destructive interpersonal mistreatment behaviours. Secondly, it is problematic because such measures are not directly linked to the interpersonal mistreatment that is measured. That is, another stressor may be the primary cause of the harm, may be the cause of the interpersonal mistreatment, or other behaviours that are not in the measure may intensify the experience of interpersonal mistreatment and thereby overstate the impact of what is measured. (3) Intent to harm is poorly theorised and not operationalised. (4)

[56] In the WBS, the impact items were directly related to the most serious incident identified by the survey participant. While not a true causal measure, it is directly related to the experience of those behaviours that the participant identified as their most serious incident.

Behavioural item scales have been critiqued elsewhere for not including non-behavioural aspects of the definition, and in this study for relying on highly similar nomological nets to validate the constructs. The shared nomological net indicates that abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism share basic similarities and, in keeping with COR theory, they function interchangeably as a source of stress.

Demonstrated relationships between constructs

In Study 1, the authors indicated the inter-relatedness of the constructs as they contextualised and discussed their differences. For example, abusive supervision[57] is not different to bullying based on behavioural tactics, recurrence, duration of behaviour, or intent to harm. The difference is in the formal power roles held by supervisor and subordinate. Therefore, abusive supervision can be viewed as a subset of workplace bullying, one where the formal power role of supervisor is used abusively. However, the authors did not describe the relationship between abusive supervision and bullying in this way. In general, abusive supervision researchers avoid directly comparing the two constructs (Bhattacharjee & Sarkar, 2024: Fischer, 2021 #974; Mackey et al., 2017; Tepper, 2007; Tepper & Henle, 2011; Tepper et al., 2017). However, bullying researchers acknowledge the relationship either directly as actions undertaken by a supervisor (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 28) or within discussions on the role and use of the power differential between the instigator and the target (Keashly et al., 2020, p. 75).

Similarly, based on the behaviours used to measure the constructs, ostracism is a subset of the other constructs. Ostracism, defined as the extent to which an individual perceives that he or she is ignored or excluded by others (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1348) is operationalised using passively excluding behaviours. Such behaviours are included in the Abusive Supervision Scale, the Negative Acts Questionnaire, and the Workplace Incivility Scale. In addition, Ferris et al. acknowledge that ostracising behaviours are included in other measures (Ferris et al., 2008, p. 1348). In Study 1, the construct of incivility appeared to be amorphous and indistinguishable from the other constructs which all share uncivil and rude behaviours. The primary distinction of incivility argued by Cortina et al. (2001)[58] is that

[57] Abusive supervision is defined by Tepper as “subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of abusive supervision. *Academy of management journal*, *43*(2), 178-190.

[58] Incivility is defined as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" Cortina, L. M., Magley, V. J., Williams, J. H., & Langhout, R. D. (2001). Incivility in the Workplace: Incidence and Impact. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *6*(1), 64-80. @64).

incivility involves milder forms of interpersonal mistreatment and ambiguous intent to harm. The points of distinction do little to substantively differentiate incivility from other constructs of interpersonal mistreatment as uncivil behaviours are included in the measures of the other constructs in the study. The proposed severity of the interpersonal mistreatment experience, indicated by behavioural recurrence and or negative impact measures, are the primary distinction between incivility and bullying or abusive supervision. However, incivility has been shown to have impacts similar to other constructs (Han et al., 2021, p. 517; Hershcovis, 2011, pp. 507, 509). Consequently, measures or harmful impact to the target also fails to differentiate incivility from other mistreatment constructs.

Shared latent positions

Shared latent positions are also a key source of commonality between the four constructs investigated in Study 1. These assumed positions mould the conceptualisation of the individual constructs and function as barriers to developing a theory of the common elements of interpersonal mistreatment.

There is a shared commitment to positivist research and the development of behavioural measurement scales because they are seen as more objective, and therefore closest to a true assessment of the interpersonal mistreatment construct focus of the research. Positivism takes the view that there is an independent external reality to human experience and positive research seeks to identify and understand the truth about the world (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Saunders et al., 2009; Yvonne Feilzer, 2010). In the process, positivist research devalues subjective experience and values data collected independently to individuals' interpretation. Consequently, the preferred measure of interpersonal mistreatment constructs is the recollection of a set of behavioural items that do not reference the survey respondents' interpretation of their experiences. This sets the measurement of interpersonal mistreatment at odds with the interpersonal nature of the phenomenon. That is, interpersonal mistreatment is inherently inter-personal, experiential, context bound, and holds multiple valid points of view. This situation is the source of a quiet ambivalence toward research participants' assessment of their own experiences. This ambivalence encourages researchers to exclude multiple points of view from their research designs, which reinforces the monocular view of current behavioural measures.

The exception in Study 1 was Einarsen et al. 2009 who included a global item with a definition as an additional measure for participants to self identify if their experiences constituted bullying (Einarsen et al., 2009, p. 28). The authors provided participants with an

unambiguous definition of bullying to counter respondents' tendency to use their own definitions. When comparing the two measures the authors focused on the overlap between the two measures and concluded that the results supported the NAQ-R measure.[59] In later work Nielsen et al. (2020) expounded on the qualitatively different nature of the two sources of data. They concluded that both measures should be used together as they provide complementary information. This idea has yet to be widely adopted. Other authors have exhorted the interpersonal mistreatment field to engage with multiple perspectives and context factors involved in interpersonal mistreatment (Neall & Tuckey, 2014).

I argue that behavioural scales in self-report survey methodology are the *most efficient* way to assess interpersonal mistreatment in organisations in that they cost efficient, produce numeric data suitable for inferential statistics, and enable reportable graphs and tables. While very useful, this does not make self-report survey methodology the *most objective* or *most rigorous* measure of interpersonal mistreatment.

The findings of Study 1 indicate a shared assumption that abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism are primarily *individual* matters. These papers and the behavioural measures do not engage with the workplace context, accepted social norms, and the relationship history between instigator and target. That is, context is avoided. The papers illustrate how the field of enquiry, and consequently the field of theorisation, is overly focused on individualised experiences of specific behaviours. However, this could simply be a reflection of the type of papers entered into the analysis, that is papers presenting validated behavioural scales to measure a defined construct. The context of interpersonal mistreatment is being increasingly discussed in the broader interpersonal mistreatment literature (D'Cruz et al., 2018; Hershcovis et al., 2020; Hershcovis & Reich, 2013; Restubog et al., 2011; Vranjes et al., 2022).

There is a jumble of ideas about physical aggression. There seems to be an assumption that physical contact is more aggressive and has more negative impact than behaviours without

[59] Comparing the self-assessment data with the NAR-R results showed that "In total, 10.6% of respondents [about 499 of 5,288 respondents] reported being a victim of workplace bullying during the last 6 months. Pearson's product-moment correlation between the total score on the NAQ-R and the perception of being a victim of workplace bullying was strong (r=0.54, p<.001), indicating that having high scores on the NAQ-R was strongly associated with labelling oneself as a victim of bullying, yet also indicating that self-labelling may be related to factors other than mere exposure to bullying behaviours." Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Notelaers, G. (2009). Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: Validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised. *Work & Stress*, *23*(1), 24-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370902815673 .

physical contact. A distinction is made between physical and psychological aggression as a valid point of differentiation between constructs. Concomitant with these latent ideas is an assumption that physical aggression is only exhibited through physical contact, that a behaviour is either physical or verbal, and that verbal means 'psychological'. Nonetheless, non-contact physicality is integral to abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism. For example, behaviours such as physical crowding (*Invades my personal privacy* – an abusive supervision item), outbursts of temper such as shouting (*Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger* - a NAQ-R item), or physical avoidance (*Others left the area when you entered* – a WOS item, and *Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie* – a WIS item) are all behaviours that convey an aggressive message primarily through physical rather than verbal means.

The point here is that the physicality of behaviour is inherent in the four constructs but poorly theorised, leading to a sometimes confusing juxtaposition of ideas. While physicality may signal intensification of the interpersonal mistreatment this needs to be investigated rather than assumed or declared. For example, increased physicality may indicate the normalisation of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Alternatively, actions that threaten, or are perceived to threaten, one's livelihood or professional reputation may indicate an escalation of interpersonal mistreatment more acutely than physically aggressive acts.

In summary, the overall finding from the document analysis is that the theoretical similarities between constructs in the study outweigh the differences and that they hold substantial common theoretical and practical bases. Characteristics that appear central are; the derogatory or undermining use of power and the shared nomological net used to validate the constructs. There is also an uncritical acceptance of single construct focus and an over-commitment to positivist methodologies. Furthermore, under-theorised or latent positions evident in the four papers are enabled through the over-focus on singular constructs.

Implications

The extent of the commonalities identified between abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility and workplace ostracism in Study 1 challenge us to think differently about construct differentiation. The commonalities add to the critique of the interpersonal misconduct literatures as being siloed (Dhanani & Bogart, 2025; Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019) and needing

to meaningfully relate constructs to each other (Branch et al., 2013; Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013; Hershcovis, 2011; Vranjes & Lyubykh, 2021; Yao et al., 2022).

Over commitment to single defined constructs in the literature

Of concern is that construct definitions appear to have functioned in a way that promote fragmentation and consequently have become a barrier to theoretical development. Definitions have high face validity because we all have an idea of, for example 'incivility'. The term incivility promotes communication through easy recognition and the construct appears to be unproblematic. Furthermore, even if we acknowledge that people have their own internalised understanding of incivility, and that understanding is quite likely different to the authors, it is difficult to move beyond the construct *incivility* because there is no alternative conceptualisation of the phenomenon. Incivility is defined, in part, by not being bullying, not being ostracism, and not being abusive supervision.

The extensive common theoretical ground across constructs of abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility and ostracism, and the demonstrated co-occurrence of diverse interpersonal mistreatment indicates that, however they are intended, definitions function more descriptively than as a theoretical basis for a distinct construct.

Alternative conceptualisation to constructs and definitions

Recently, academics have called for a re-think of individual constructs in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures, moving away from the single construct focus of the past. More specifically to this study, Fischer et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of the construct abusive supervision. Their findings highlight conceptual and technical limitations of the construct and called for a fundamental rethink of abusive supervision. Bullying researchers' latest advice is to measure both behavioural and global perspectives of bullying from the targets' point of view (Nielsen et al., 2020), have acknowledged that only minor differences exist between some constructs (Einarsen et al., 2020a, p. 5) and that qualitative methodologies can engage with the interactional and multi-dimensional aspect of bullying (Keashly et al., 2020, p. 84). Since the development of the WOS, the concept of ostracism has expanded to include direct negative attention (rejection-based exclusion) as well as passive aggressive excluding behaviours (ostracism-based exclusion) (Rudert et al., 2019, p. 2). Rudert identified emerging areas of research to be the similarity between social exclusion and the objectification in sexual harassment (2019, p. 4) and using electronic devices to exclude another (2019, p. 6). These are all promising movements toward re-considering the array of construct definitions in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures.

Research that investigates these issues will further challenge the interpersonal mistreatment constructs and operationalisations investigated here.[60]

Future research and theorisation need to explore alternatives to construct definitions as the backbone of theorisation about interpersonal mistreatment. If we were to identify a common meta construct to all of interpersonal mistreatment, what would it look like? Recent work by Dhanani and Bogart (2025) and (Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019) proposed a basis for integrating workplace mistreatment constructs as an outcome of their meta-analysis of review papers in the literatures. They identified constructs on the basis of four dimensions that can indicate the unique nature of the construct. They are: (1) the actors' motivation, which they argued could indicate more or less intense mistreatment behaviours; (2) the degree of interpersonal (face to face) contact, which they argue distinguishes between acts of commission and acts of omission. These are equivalent to the direct and indirect behavioural tactics identified in Study 1. (3) Magnitude of harm to the target is the third dimension. (4) Degree to which the behaviour is prohibited. Dhanani and Bogart argue that behaviours that are not identified in law or policy as prohibited are the most difficult to defend oneself against. In terms of the tactics identified in Study 1, these would correlate with overt compared to covertly enacted behaviours. As they say, "employee experiences of, and organizational responses to, mistreatment will vary depending on whether the behaviour is formally prohibited or not" (Dhanani & Bogart, 2025, p. 14).

These authors' work is a break from prior thinking about the array of different interpersonal mistreatment constructs that offers one pathway to reconciling constructs. Reconciling being their term for identifying constructs that could be merged. However, Dhanani and Bogart uncritically accepted all elements of the definitions included in their study. This led them to include harm to the target and instigators' intent as elements by which they group an array of construct definitions. Through the latent thematic analysis in Study 1, I have found these elements to be theoretically problematic and poor delineators of interpersonal mistreatment constructs. The findings from this research offer an alternative approach.

[60] However, there is a trap here. As alluded to in the literature review (see section Construct proliferation) it is possible that current efforts will result in a proliferation of umbrella terms, rather than a critical re-think of the process of generating definitions and their measures.

Base construct and variations

Taking a philosophical pragmatist stance, our conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment needs to be useful in an applied context. For example, the organisation that provided survey data for Study 2 held eleven different definitions for constructs of unacceptable behaviour. However, the three primary distinctions across the behavioural spectrum that are useful to the organisation are; technology facilitated abuse, sexualised harassment or violence, and bullying and harassment. These three categories of behaviour are subject to different laws in Australia, and organisations can have individual policies and training to address them. From this observation it is clear that some variations on the interpersonal mistreatment theme helps organisations and individuals recognise and respond the problem. The question is how many variations, and on what bases do they share similarity?

Abusive use of power and behavioural co-occurrence

This research explored commonality between constructs while being mindful of their distinctions. From the research findings presented in this thesis we could build a concept of essentially shared elements across all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. I propose that from this basis, variations may be articulated but these variations will share the inherent attributes of all interpersonal mistreatment.

At this point two elements have been identified that could be considered basic to interpersonal mistreatment: that is, the derogatory or undermining use of power to denigrate others in the workplace, and that diverse interpersonal mistreatment behaviours co-occur. The abusive use of power is key to sexual misconduct and to the abusive use of technology as well as the four constructs in Study 1. Consequently, abusive use of one's power to denigrate another is shared by all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment engaged with in this study.

The other commonalities identified in Study 1 either present inconsistencies yet to be resolved, such as the issue of intent, or assumptions to be examined, such as the idea that harm is proof of misconduct. Some of these may be identified as essential elements of interpersonal mistreatment as our theorisation develops.

A second principle of interpersonal mistreatment was demonstrated in Study 2. That is, based on the experiences of WBS participants, all interpersonal mistreatment behaviours co-

occur. The boundaries set by construct definitions only partially reflect how interpersonal mistreatment is enacted or experienced.

This is not to say we abandon the current array of constructs. It is likely that we will need some sub-categories of interpersonal mistreatment, but far fewer than currently exist. For example, the work of Dhanani et al, have identified that sexualised mistreatment is a construct of its' own. However, the conceptualisation presented here holds sexual mistreatment as a variation of mistreatment, not an entirely separate idea.

Way forward

Future research design should address the theoretical and applied characteristics of the base construct and how it relates to their investigation. Even if the scope of a research project is focused on a single construct of interpersonal mistreatment, researchers need to argue for the theoretical and applied distinction between their focus and the foundational construct and discuss the implications of co-occurrence to their work.

Critically engage with theoretical frameworks to challenge the premise of constructs

Steven Hobfoll's Conservation of resources theory is centrally concerned with stress, how people build resources to help them cope with stress and the way various stressors deplete those resources. Interpersonal mistreatment is reasonably considered to be a source of stress (Neall & Tuckey, 2014; Potter et al., 2016; Tepper et al., 2017) which makes it a good fit with COR theory. However, COR theory makes no qualitative distinction between one source of stress and another, rather it theorises the cumulative nature of stress from multiple sources. This poses a challenge for a literature that suffers from construct proliferation. Findings in this thesis support COR theory's orientation to different sources of stress, as demonstrated from the shared nomological net identified in Study 1 and the co-occurrence of all behaviours in Study 2. The challenge for future researchers is to demonstrate what is unique to the particular source of stress arising from one construct of interpersonal mistreatment.

Further, COR theory can be read as sympathetic to perpetrators. It proposes that people are 'driven' to interpersonal mistreatment through experiencing excessive stress themselves. While this point of view is present in the interpersonal mistreatment literature it is not the dominant narrative. This assumed position evident in Study 1 was that interpersonal mistreatment is inherently immoral. Engaging with a theory such as SIT/SCT would provide

a neutral position from which to articulate and test the range of motivations for enacting interpersonal mistreatment.

We need to explore other ways to structure our observations of this phenomenon? Some alternatives to construct definitions could be to: draw the concept of interpersonal mistreatment experiences from the study population, or to identify alternate bases for grouping experiences of interpersonal mistreatment that may cut across defined constructs. One alternative could be to group behaviours based on the weaponization of organisational procedures and expectations. This conceptualisation could include any construct of interpersonal mistreatment including technology facilitated abuse of power, sexual or non-sexualised coercion. Another basis for grouping behaviours could be gas lighting – all forms of belittling and denying another person's experience through ridicule, exclusion, false rumours, & blame. Again, this could include technology facilitated abuse of power, sexual or non-sexualised coercion.

These alternate conceptualisations of interpersonal mistreatment retain the behavioural spectrum identified through the process of construct proliferation. However, the way those behaviours are related to each other within the overall concept of interpersonal mistreatment differs. Our conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment and how it is operationalised need not be limited to the current array of defined constructs, or even a re-grouping of the current array of defined constructs. We need to be theoretically brave and ask questions of the status quo, such as, do we even need definitions?

8.2 Finding: Tactics – unexpected and useful

In Study 1, behaviour scale items were identified as having an array of potential ways they can be enacted, called tactics in this thesis. This is not a new observation. There is a slender thread in the literatures which acknowledges that *how* behaviours are enacted is important (Baron et al., 1999; Bowling & Beehr, 2006; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2021; Duncan & Rivers, 2013; Hershcovis, 2011; Keashly et al., 2020; Shute et al., 2007; Spector & Jex, 1998). For example, in their study of Australian adolescents Shute et al. (2007) identified that behaviours can be simultaneously verbal, indirect and sexualised. Duncan and Rivers (2013) identified that there are different modes through which behaviours can be carried out, such as being covert or the use of electronic devices. Buss' conceptualized human aggression identified three dimensions; physical-verbal, active-passive, and direct-indirect (Buss, 1961).

Drawing on Buss' work Keashly et al. (2020) identified that "most hostile behaviour in the workplace is verbal, indirect and passive". They also identified omission and cyber facilitated acts as ways that bullying can be enacted. D'Cruz and Noronha (2021) identified internal and external bullying, and real or cyber bullying as two of three axes in her discussion of the conceptualisation of bullying. Nonetheless, the way behaviours are enacted has not been well recognised or theorised in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures.

This study identified a broader range of tactics for behavioural items than previous authors and delved into the practical and theoretical implications of behavioural tactics. The document analysis identified seven ways that behavioural items can be enacted; direct or indirect, overt or covert, involving third parties (or not), ridicule (or not), manipulation (or not), denigration (or not), and excluding or including the target. These ways of enacting a behaviour can be layered. For example, *reminding you of your mistakes* can be a combination of denigration, ridicule (if using sarcasm or passing the behaviour of as humour), and expressed either overtly to a group or covertly just to the target.[61] In Study 2 sexualised and electronically facilitated behaviours were included as unique tactics to those already identified in Study 1. However, it should be noted that a behaviour becomes layered with meaning through more than just the tactics used to enact it. The history between the target and instigator, the work and organisational context, and the cultural significance of the behaviour itself all lend meaning onto the behaviour. This is how apparently inconsequential behaviours can become tools of abuse of power, bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment. Through tactics, individual behaviours can 'fit' many different scenarios and different interpersonal mistreatment constructs.

Tactics are behavioural potentialities because the way a behaviour is enacted can signify differences about the mistreatment. The layering of behavioural tactics can, for example, modify, conceal or intensify the interpersonal mistreatment. A single behaviour can validly contribute to abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism and workplace bullying, sexual harassment, and/or electronic bullying. In addition, many behaviours can share the same tactic. In this way a single tactic can be the basis of an individual construct of interpersonal mistreatment, such as sexualised behaviours in sexual harassment, or passive excluding behaviours in Ferris et al.'s operationalisation of ostracism (2008).

[61] A protagonist may favour one mode of delivery over another. Indeed, it is unlikely that instigators are 'fluent' in all behavioural tactics. Research into instigators' preferred way of acting may identify links between behavioural enactment and the motivation, self identity, or sense of social power derived from the behaviours.

Furthermore, I argue that behavioural tactics can be a theoretically useful and practical rubric to articulate the inter-relatedness of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment because they are independent to the defined individual constructs currently in the literature.

Tactics avoid foreclosing discussions and provide theoretical space

To date, diverse constructs of interpersonal mistreatment have been defended based on definitional nuances and validated using behavioural measurement scales. The co-occurrence of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment has had little theoretical focus and rarely been explored empirically. Applying tactics thinking to the theory of interpersonal mistreatment generates conceptual space to do this work by offering an alternative lens to critically examine the basis of similarities between interpersonal mistreatment constructs that is independent of definitions.

The idea of tactics – the potentials for behaviour enactment - provide the concepts and language for theorists to articulate the basis on which constructs relate to each other in a measurable way. For example, are both constructs expressed through overt actions? Do they exclude or include covert actions?

In tactics thinking, the first observation is that behaviours can be enacted using multiple, layered tactics. For example, telling a ridiculing joke about a person's appearance may be sexualised or it may be non-sexualised, or it may be ambiguous with regard to sexualisation. The same base behaviour can be an example of sexual harassment, and 'general' harassment.

The second observation is that tactics are qualitatively different to each other, so that sexualising a behaviour will qualitatively change the nature of the interpersonal mistreatment. For any behaviour that can be sexualised, this sexualisation can overlay other tactics such as ridicule, technology facilitated behaviours, excluding, manipulating, and/or violent enactments.[62] If we consider sexualisation as a tactic then all sexualised behaviours are qualitatively different to non-sexualised behaviours. Consequently, if a behaviours such as *Stared at you in a way that made you uncomfortable* is sexualised then it is an example of

[62] Discrimination of any form, on the other hand, is not a behavioural tactic but the result of interpersonal mistreatment to a target that is motivated by race, gender, age, religious or cultural identity, or sexual orientation. In this sense discrimination can be seen as similar to ostracism being an outcome of interpersonal mistreatment.

sexual harassment. If it is not sexualised, then it could be an example of bullying or harassment, incivility and so on. Nonetheless, the base behaviour, and any other behavioural tactics, are shared across these constructs.

Implications: An alternate base for conceptualisation

Behavioural tactics and how they can be layered enable a discussion about how sexualised versus non-sexualised behaviours are related without challenging construct definitions. We observe the behavioural data presented, drawn from the experience of research participants without prior categorisation. That is, tactics provide theoretical space to map out similarities, differences and co-occurrence without falling into prior arguments about definitional boundaries.

Applied to the interpretation of the cluster analysis results, tactics thinking enabled a curiosity about how sexualised behaviours co-occurred with non-sexualised behaviours. Sexualised behaviours appeared much more frequently in the presence of high numbers of recurring non-sexualised behaviours. As sexualised behaviours are qualitatively different to non-sexualised behaviours, there is no reason to think of sexual harassment as a sub-set of non-sexualised construct such as bullying. In Study 2, the conclusion was drawn that they are different but inter-twined. The way the experience of sexualised behaviours co-occurred with non-sexualised behaviours appears to signal a qualitative shift in the workplace culture toward tolerating more and different types of interpersonal mistreatment. Another consideration is that many non-sexualised behaviour items may have been sexualised by an instigator, but the design of the survey would have obscured this effect. The extent that this is the case is a topic for future research.

Identifying tactics and using them to relate one construct to another can help address construct proliferation by highlighting inter-relatedness. Tactics also offer an alternate basis for grouping behavioural experiences. For example, Ferris et al.'s conceptualization of ostracism is operationalised as a single tactic construct. The Workplace Ostracism Scale is a good example of a measurement tool that is focused on a particular behavioural tactic, and may be an alternative way to group and theorise about experiences of interpersonal mistreatment compared to the array of defined constructs currently in the literature.

Furthermore, tactics can provide an alternate continuum to describe how interpersonal mistreatment intensifies based on tactics. Behaviours that are easily concealed are more

commonplace than overt behaviours, likely because of the risk to the instigator of being recognised and called to account. Situations where overt behaviours are more commonplace indicate a workplace culture that tolerates these forms of interpersonal mistreatment. A hierarchy of intensification, then would move from covert and indirect behaviours, to behaviours that involved third parties (such as ridicule), to behaviours that involved third parties or left some form of record such as gossip and electronically facilitated behaviours, through to overt versions of all behaviours. Using this hierarchy, overt rudeness would be an indication of a severely abusive workplace.

In summary, including behavioural tactics in our conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment can enable a parsimonious account of the relationships between different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, based on behaviour and range of possible tactics that the behaviour can be enacted with. Further work is needed on the interplay between behavioural tactics and defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Are there tactics that are fundamental to all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, or are tactics most useful in delineating between constructs? By applying tactics thinking to constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, the theoretical gaps in our literatures can be engaged without necessarily generating new definitions or creating new constructs.

8.3 Finding: Co-occurrence and recurrence of behaviours

The results from the cluster analyses in Study 2 demonstrated that behaviours that are considered to measure disparate constructs co-occur with all other behavioural items. Targeted individuals can be, and often are, the focus of multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Furthermore, the less frequently experienced behaviours, that is ridicule, violent, sexualised, and electronic behaviours, always co-occurred with excluding and manipulating behaviours in this study.

Excluding and manipulative behaviours

The results of Study 2 suggest that the experience of exclusion and manipulation central to all interpersonal mistreatment, at least for the survey participants involved in this study. These results encourage new thinking about these most commonly experienced behaviours.

Manipulative and excluding behaviours were the most frequently experienced behaviours in all cluster solutions and they co-occurred with behaviours that exemplified disparate constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. A key difference, and often the only difference, between clusters was the level of recurrence of these behaviours. This suggests that relating different interpersonal mistreatment constructs along a continuum from mild to severe is better conceptualized as the number of behaviours and the recurrence of those behaviours rather than the construct the behaviours are attributed to measuring. Seven behaviours were the most commonly experienced;

1. Undervalued your efforts
2. Ignored your opinion in a way that made you feel uncomfortable
3. Unfairly blamed you for something
4. Reminded others of your errors of mistakes, and
5. Three different behaviours were experienced with the same frequency:
   Withheld information or resources from you
   Spread gossip or rumours about you
   Not returned your greetings in a way that made you feel uncomfortable.

These behaviours can be enacted by co-workers or supervisors and they can range from being merely uncivil to intense experiences of bullying and abuse of power depending on context and how they are enacted. Manipulating and excluding behaviours can be attributed to a wide array of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, including harassment, abuse of power, bullying, incivility and discrimination. They have in common a process of disparaging and/or undermining the target. These behaviours are largely verbal or acts of omission and can be indirect aggressions. These attributes make them easily hidden and difficult to identify and record. This challenges the target to ‘make a fuss’ by calling out the behaviour or to ‘accept’ the behaviour and thereby becoming subtly complicit in normalising this type of interaction. However, both options are likely to further shift the balance of power in favour of the instigator.

The centrality of manipulative and excluding behaviours to all cluster solution in Study 2 indicate that manipulating and excluding behaviours may be an essential part of all experiences of interpersonal mistreatment. Further, the experience of these behaviours may contribute to the target’s vulnerability to other types of interpersonal mistreatment behaviours. This would be in keeping with prior researchers who have argued that ‘low level’ behaviours can lead to increased victimisation. This could be a fruitful direction for future theorisation and research. Another avenue for future research is the role that ridicule and physically aggressive behaviours play in the intensification of interpersonal mistreatment.

Sexualised behaviours co-occur with non-sexualised behaviours

The results of the cluster analysis challenge the divide between sexualised and non-sexualised behaviour in the literature and in research practice. There was no evidence of sexualised mistreatment being experienced independently to other non-sexualised forms of mistreatment. Neither was there evidence of a unique pattern of non-sexualised behaviour experiences that accompanied sexualised behaviours. That is, survey participants who experienced sexualised behaviours also experienced the dominant pattern of excluding and manipulating behaviours described above.

Sexualised behaviours became more prominent as the total number of behaviours increased, possibly indicating that sexualised interpersonal mistreatment is enabled by the presence of other interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Furthermore, the negative impact of interpersonal mistreatment is closely linked to recurrence rather than the type of behaviour experienced. That is, among the group of survey participants who experienced the most extensive amount and range of interpersonal mistreatment, non-sexualised behaviours can be equally or more impactful than being the target of interpersonal mistreatment that includes sexualised behaviours. These results support the work of other researchers who noted that general harassment or bullying can be more harmful than sexual harassment (Dhanani & Bogart, 2025; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Lapierre et al., 2005).

Implications for sexual harassment and bullying

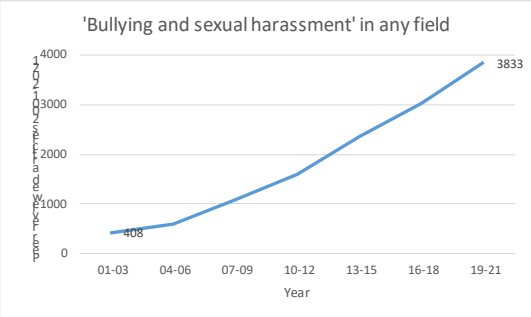
The cluster analysis results demonstrated that behavioural items used in measurement scales of disparate types of interpersonal mistreatment actually co-occur. Further, these behavioural items were not experienced in patterns that recognisably reflect definitional boundaries. I engaged in a brief post hoc investigation review of research between 2011 and 2021 to see if this finding was supported in anyway in the wider literature. I focused on the co-occurrence of sexual harassment and workplace bullying as these are two of the most easily recognised and widely researched constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Further, the behaviours contributing to these two constructs are determined by whether they are sexualised or not, making any co-occurrence of the two constructs clear.

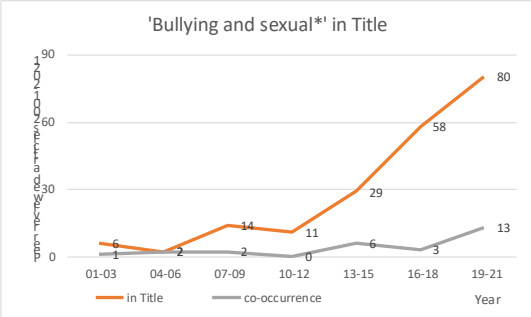
I undertook a brief literature search to identify research that investigated both sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace literature, there were so few papers available I widened the parameters to include educational literature[63] (see Figure 29 - Text Box)

Figure 29. Bullying and sexual harassment cited in research 2001 -2021

'Bullying and sexual harassment' title in the literature

A search for all peer reviewed publications with 'bullying and sexual harassment' in any field between 2001 to 2021 using the ANU Library SuperSearch function was conducted. Literature that considers both bullying and sexual harassment has grown steadily over this time (see Figure "*Bullying and sexual harassment" in any field*.)





However, most authors discuss bullying and sexual harassment as context for their study. Relatively few make both constructs the topic of their study, and most of these were in the education literature (see Figure *'Bullying and sexual*' in Title*). Further, it is rare for authors to consider that bullying and sexual harassment co-occur (Note 1). For those that do, most are in the field of adolescent education research. Only five articles address bullying and sexual harassment in adult life (Note 2). Two of these publications were research involving the workplace.

This mini-review, as limited as it is (Note 3), illustrates how the division between bullying and sexual harassment is perpetuated in organisational research. These two constructs are often linked in commentary, but their relationship is generally avoided as the focus of investigation.

Note 1: The construct 'sexual bullying' in the education literature was not considered as co-occurrence because it was treated as a single construct, similar to how bullying is a more extreme version of harassment.
Note 2: These five articles included two papers that tracked a history of bullying from adolescence to young adulthood.
Note 3: There are known examples missing from this quick literature search, such as (Spector et al., 2014) review of Nurse exposure to nonphysical violence, bullying and sexual harassment.

[63] Throughout my PhD candidature, when I dipped into the education literature about interpersonal mistreatment, I often found it more innovative than the workplace literature.

The review indicates that an increasing number of academic papers and commentary use the phrase ‘bullying and sexual harassment’, indicating a growing recognition that these two constructs need to be considered together. From the mini-literature review, it is apparent that very few studies in the workplace literatures have engaged with the co-occurrence of bullying and sexual harassment as the focus of their study. In the educational literature, more researchers are investigating the nexus between sexual harassment and bullying (Duncan & Rivers, 2013) and the concept of sexualised bullying has emerged (Ging & Neary, 2019; Jones, 2006; Kofoed & Ringrose, 2012; Page et al., 2015; Shute et al., 2007; Turner-Moore et al., 2021). In the organisational literature it is very rare to consider these two constructs of interpersonal mistreatment in the one study. Only four research publications identified in this review considered the co-occurrence of bullying and sexual harassment, and these were not focused on the workplace. One was concerned with sexual minorities use of dating apps (Lauckner et al., 2019). Two focused on the longitudinal impact of bully targets during secondary school (Lee et al., 2019; Provenzano & Boroughs, 2021), and one paper was concerned with the impact of historical sexual abuse and bullying victimisation carried into adulthood (González-Chica et al., 2019).

(Lampman et al., 2009) investigated incivility, bullying and sexual attention aimed at faculty in an Alaskan university. They developed their own scale of 30 behavioural items based on the experiences of faculty staff. Through principal components analysis they identified incivility and bullying as one factor and sexual attention as another. Lampman et al reported that the majority of faculty staff experienced incivility from students, and 10 to 30% experienced “Sexual attention and bullying behaviours” (Lampman et al., 2009, p. 342). However, they reported results for incivility, bullying and unwanted sexual attention separately. They did not report on the co-occurrence of the behaviour items or the co-occurrence of incivility/bullying and unwanted sexual attentions. This is an example of how the analysis and reporting process can reinforce the idea of independent constructs and ignore data that would challenge that independence. In short, most research is conducted on one or other construct, and those that include both are not focused on co-occurrence.

I had also assumed that sexual harassment and bullying were mutually exclusive experiences, or at least highly distinctive to each other. However, the results from the cluster analysis in Study 2 revealed that sexualised and non-sexualised constructs of interpersonal mistreatment are closely intertwined experientially. These findings support the limited earlier work that challenges the demarcation between bullying and sexual harassment. In an earlier discussion paper, Jones asked the question “What are the differences, if any, between

sexual harassment and workplace bullying? (Jones, 2006)[64]. She was concerned to explore gender and the interconnections between gendered bullying and sexual harassment. Jones made the distinction between sexual harassment (unwanted sexual attention, intimidation or coercion) and gender harassment, which conveys insulting, hostile, or degrading attitudes towards women. She noted there are clear overlaps between bullying and sexual harassment particularly in this area of gender based harassment. However; "resistance to incorporating gendered bullying into the concept of sexual harassment is found not only in the bullying literature but also in the dominant paradigm supporting research into sexual harassment" (Jones, 2006, p. 156).

Leskinen et al. (2011) studied sex-based harassment and gender-based harassment among women in the military and the legal profession. They concurred with Jones' distinction between sexualised behaviours that involved unwanted sexual attention and discriminatory behaviours that were excluding or demeaning based on gender. They found that non-sexualized forms of gender harassment were by far the most common forms of harassment. Furthermore, women who experienced sexualised harassment also reported the highest levels of non-sexualized forms of gender harassment, indicating that these two forms of harassment co-occurred.[65] The cluster analysis findings confirmed these observations in a different organisational setting and at a later point in time. In Salin's (2018) review of workplace bullying and gender she noted there were complex relationships between gender and forms of bullying and she suggests that sexual harassment may be a gendered form of bullying.

> "Although sexual harassment is typically studied as a separate phenomenon [to workplace bullying], it is important to note that sexual harassment and sex-based harassment can overlap with and be part of the workplace bullying experience" (Salin, 2018, p. 11).

[64] The above papers (Jones, 2006; Leskinen, et al., 2011; Salin, 2018) acknowledge the overlap between workplace bullying and sexual harassment. They also acknowledge the qualitative difference between sexualised and non-sexualised behaviours. The papers struggle to relate bullying and sexual harassment on the basis of definitional or theoretical grounds. The authors appear to be thinking in terms of overlaps and sub-sets, which has a two dimensional quality as though these relationships are best explored using a Venn diagram. The layered nature of tactics and the evidence of co-occurrence encourages a re-assessment of the constructs.

[65] Leskinen et al. noted that "there are major qualitative differences across the experiences; for example, being sexually propositioned on one occasion is not the same as being targeted with demeaning anti-female remarks on a daily basis" (p. 37) yet social scientists routinely combine them together. This is congruent with known technical issues in the operationalisation of interpersonal mistreatment constructs.

The above discussions indicate that there is a need for a theoretical re-appraisal of the distinction between sexualised and non-sexualised forms of interpersonal mistreatment. Experience of sexualised misconduct is entwined with the experience of non-sexualised behaviours. The logical implication of this finding is that results from targeted studies of sexual misconduct are likely to be confounded with the unmeasured but co-occurring experiences of non-sexualised interpersonal mistreatment. The implication of these findings is that there is a need for multiple forms of mistreatment to be assessed simultaneously in order to examine their relationship as they are experienced in the workplace.

Risks of single construct research

Considering that behavioural experiences are much wider than definitional boundaries there are risks to studying single defined constructs to the exclusion of others. Ignoring other types of co-occurring interpersonal mistreatment risks:

- miss-attributing harm from other interpersonal mistreatment to the focus construct,
- invalidating the experience of people who suffer wider expressions of interpersonal mistreatment, and
- contributing to the normalisation of the other forms of interpersonal mistreatment that are not the focus of study.

These risks also indicate that interventions should not be isolated or siloed to one type of interpersonal mistreatment. Interventions need interlinked and consistent messaging about behavioural standards across all types of interpersonal mistreatment.

8.4 Limitations

The exploratory nature of the research

Exploratory and qualitative research have limitations on generalisability as the of the object of study is contextualised in specific situations. The document analysis was exploratory qualitative work, conducted by a single researcher as part of her PhD program. Although procedures were followed to examine and verify the emerging findings of the study, another researcher may well undertake a similar analysis, make different observations and arrive at

different conclusions. Further, the document analysis was restricted the study to four seminal papers to help maintain research focus and keep the research of a manageable scale. Another researcher may well undertake a similar analysis, using the same or different papers, make different observations and arrive at different conclusions. Ideally a replication study help assess the generalisability and comprehensiveness of these findings.

Generalisability

The generalisability of the secondary data analysis is limited by the unique nature of the organisation and that the Workplace Behaviours Survey (WBS) was designed specifically for that organisational context.

The dominant pattern of excluding and manipulating behaviours, and the inter-twining of sexualised, electronic, violent and ridiculing behaviours with manipulating and excluding behaviours, may be a feature of this data collected from Defence personnel. Further study is needed to see if these findings are evident in other organisational contexts.

Furthermore, the impetus to design the WBS inclusive of disparate constructs of interpersonal mistreatment was specifically to address an identified organisational need. While the behavioural items were drawn from published scales in academic literature, some were edited for relevance to organisational members. The survey design and the behavioural items selected may not translate directly to other organisational contexts.

Other limitations of the study

The aim of this research was to explore the shared space between constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Due to this focus, key areas of engagement have not been included in the analyses, for example I have not engaged with the gendered nature of interpersonal mistreatment or the way it disproportionately affects women and minority groups.

9 Contributions to knowledge and future research directions

This thesis set out to explore the possibility of theoretical and methodological common ground among different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. The results identified commonality in definitions, validations, behavioural experiences and under theorisation. From these findings, the elements of a potential base construct shared by all types of interpersonal mistreatment were identified. A 'base construct'[66] of all of the individually defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment would acknowledge what is theoretically and experientially shared. Having a base construct challenges us to consider what is indeed common and what is meaningfully distinct between constructs within the context of definition, theory and practice. Further, behavioural tactics present a new way to conceptualise qualitative differences in interpersonal mistreatment behaviours that are independent to definitional boundaries.

9.1 Commonality and co-occurrence indicate a base construct

The document analysis found little evidence that abusive supervision, workplace bullying, incivility, or ostracism were qualitatively different constructs. The findings indicated a common substrata to the constructs based on shared behavioural content and common theoretical elements; specifically power differences, the cumulative nature of harm, and the

[66] Throughout this thesis I have struggled with the terminology used to express a conceptualisation of the general field of workplace interpersonal mistreatment. I settled on calling it a 'base construct' or 'the common ground' to describe workplace interpersonal mistreatment in its broadest form. However, it may be that another term has more utility. For example, the phrase 'workplace bullying and harassment' or WBH could be expanded to include sexualised bullying and harassment, electronically facilitated bullying and harassment and non-sexualised interpersonal bullying and harassment. Some authors have already used the term workplace bullying and harassment in this fashion. For example, the International Association of Workplace Bullying and Harassment casts a wide net of interest that captures all forms of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

potential for ambiguous intent to harm. Of these commonalities, abuse of power is central. The use of power to establish or reiterate personal advantage through devaluing another is common to all constructs in this thesis, including sexual misconduct and cyber bullying. Further, power can be accrued by the protagonist through multiple and repeated behaviours that demoralise and disempower targets. This is at the heart of the sense of powerlessness that targets feel in the face of mistreatment.

The four papers included in the latent thematic document analysis predicted similar relationships between similar outcome variables (refer to *Shared nomological net* in section 4.1). While the exact measures may vary, the underlying logic of the respective nomological nets remain constant. The process of establishing construct validity demonstrated that the constructs fit a stress response pattern in accordance with COR theory, but did not prove that one construct was distinct to another. In fact, the construct validation process supports the proposition that there is an underlying construct common to all of them.

In Study 2, the behaviours that were experienced most frequently were excluding and manipulating behaviours. The patterns of how these behaviours co-occur with all other behavioural items dominated the series of cluster analyses. There were two primary patterns of behavioural experience in the data; (1) excluding and manipulating behaviours were the most frequent behaviours in all cluster solutions and cooccurred with all other behaviours, and (2) as the number of behaviours experienced increases, excluding and manipulating behaviours may be combined with ridiculing behaviours.

Manipulating and excluding behaviours can be attributed to a wide array of different constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, including harassment, abuse of power, bullying, incivility and discrimination. They have in common a process of disparaging and/or undermining the target. These behaviours are largely verbal acts or acts of omission and can be indirect aggressions. These attributes make them easily hidden and difficult to identify and record.

In summary, the common ground shared by the types of interpersonal mistreatment examined in these investigations is based on shared conceptualisations of the abuse of power, shared construct validation, and a common behavioural foundation. In particular, the cluster analysis results demonstrated that disparate types of interpersonal mistreatment were inter-twined, so that all types of interpersonal mistreatment shared excluding and manipulative experiences. These characteristics could form the basis of a core construct of interpersonal mistreatment.

9.2 Elements of a Base construct of interpersonal mistreatment

A base construct would reflect the theoretical and applied need for an of umbrella term of interpersonal mistreatment, but avoid the loose generality that those terms have had in the past. It needs to specifically identify what all constructs of interpersonal mistreatment share. Two elements have been identified in this thesis, and a third that may or may not be recognised as a key element of interpersonal mistreatment through future research and theorisation. From the findings in this thesis, two elements of all interpersonal mistreatment include:

1. All interpersonal mistreatment are an interpersonal phenomenon, given meaning from the immediate situation, organisational and wider social norms.
2. Interpersonal mistreatment involves the abuse of power in a way that demeans or undermines the target.

This study engaged with two theoretical frameworks; COR theory and social identity/self-categorisation theory (SIT/SCT). Both theories challenge the conceptualisation of interpersonal mistreatment in the literatures in different ways. COR theory challenged the idea of construct proliferation, positioning that all mistreatment is a source of stress. This was supported by the highly similar nomological nets of the four constructs included in the latent thematic document analysis. SIT/SCT challenges the normative and a-theoretical approach as to why interpersonal mistreatment occurs. To the above 2 base elements of interpersonal mistreatment a third could be added:

3. Interpersonal mistreatment is functional for the instigator. That is, in keeping with Social Identity Theory and Self Categorisation Theory, I propose that instigators enact mistreatment behaviours for conscious or habitual reasons that appear beneficial to them.

This third element addresses one of the findings from Study 1, that there was confusion about whether an act should be intentional or unintentional. Because of this ambivalence I argue that intentionality is not a definitive characteristic of interpersonal mistreatment. Instigators can be wilfully ignorant, uncaring, or fully intentional in their abuse of power of

any construct.[67] However I take the authors' point that we need to address the *why* of interpersonal mistreatment. Drawing on SIT/SCT, I consider that interpersonal mistreatment is functional. Acts of interpersonal mistreatment fulfill a function for the instigator, be it intentional or habitual. The instigator is acting in accordance with their beliefs about what is helpful for them, right or appropriate. To investigate this further we can ask the question 'What does the behaviour do for the instigator?'

Based on this research, the following three elements were not included as elements for a base construct of interpersonal mistreatment.

- All interpersonal mistreatment includes manipulative and excluding behaviours.
- All interpersonal mistreatment is a source of stress
- Increasing numbers of incidents increases negative impact to the target and the workplace.

These elements were common to the constructs included in this thesis. However, there are theoretical counter arguments that need to be answered. For example, there may be a form of interpersonal mistreatment that doesn't include manipulative and excluding behaviours. We need to conceptualise the idea of failed interpersonal mistreatment, and question if this failed mistreatment is identified by a lack of stress response. Lastly, although the relationship between increased number of behavioural experiences and increased negative response is very strong, theoretically we have not accounted for single high impact behaviours and how these behaviours relate to more frequently experienced behaviours.

The above three elements may be best interpreted as indicators of intensification in the misconduct rather than qualitatively different constructs. For example, constructs that include additional tactics to manipulative and excluding behaviours could signify an intensification, as would increasing markers of stress, increasing numbers of behaviours experienced and increasing recurrence of those behaviours.

This is a start to identifying a base construct of all interpersonal mistreatment drawn from the findings from this research. Future work is needed to corroborate these findings and further develop the key markers of a base construct. For example, with this new conceptualisation, on what basis would a construct be considered a variant construct rather than an expression of the base construct? Further, there are many theoretical questions that have not been

[67] For example, when abuse is enacted from a place of privilege it may be invisible to the instigator or may feel justified by the instigator.

engaged with in the literature to date that will shape the base construct in meaningful ways. For example, harm may be a common outcome of interpersonal mistreatment, but it is not an automatic indication that interpersonal mistreatment has taken place. What does failed interpersonal mistreatment look like? Theorists need to address the impact of single behaviours that have recurring effects, such as electronic bullying, or single work decisions that disadvantage a person repeatedly. If constructs have been validated against stress, is there a characteristic of stress from interpersonal mistreatment that is unique and measurably different to other stressors?

9.3 Characteristics of under-theorisation

Over the prior decades many researchers have critiqued the interpersonal mistreatment literature as being 'under-theorised'. I engaged with this idea through the theoretical frameworks of COR theory and SIT/SCT theory. As a result, one of the contributions to literature is an articulation of three elements that contribute to 'under theorisation' in the interpersonal mistreatment literatures; over commitment to individual constructs and undervaluing of shared elements, over reliance on positivist methods and individual level experience, and avoiding theoretical challenges.

Over commitment to single constructs and undervaluing commonalities

Judging by the published literature, single differentiated constructs are a successful research strategy for academics. Mining the rich vein of construct differentiation and describing antecedent and consequent variables to each construct separately has been highly rewarding and provided invaluable evidence as to how interpersonal mistreatment individuals and workplaces. However, the commitment to articulating individual constructs has come at the cost of 'low' level theorisation which resulted in the construct definitions doing the heavy theoretical lifting.

The findings from Study 2 demonstrate that a focus on individual constructs does not describe the phenomenon as it is experienced in the workplace. Findings from Study 1 indicate that a single construct focus is undermined by measurement and definitional similarities with other constructs.

The challenge for researchers and theorists is to articulate and demonstrate meaningful differences between individual constructs and the elements that are shared by all constructs

of interpersonal mistreatment. Three of these elements have been identified above, and a further three elements need further theorisation and may signify intensification rather than qualitatively different constructs.

Over reliance on positivist methods and individual level experience

Study 1 identified that construct validation was based on maintaining a singular focus on one construct and developing a behavioural item scale to measure it using positivist methodologies to validate the measure. There are two main design short comings; the singular construct focus which avoided testing the independence of one construct to another, and the over reliance on survey methodology, which narrows the perspective of the researcher to a list of relatively objective behavioural experiences used to identify the construct which were identified as the reification of construct definitions and behavioural measurement scales. These technical critiques have been known and articulated for some time.

Nonetheless, I argue that self-report survey methodology has made a valuable contribution to the development of the field. However, the over-use of this methodology contributes to resistance to engage with alternatives.

Avoiding challenges posed by meta theoretical frameworks

The interpersonal mistreatment literature has a passing engagement with meta theories such as COR theory, or SIT/SCT theory. There are some well-known models that encapsulate the thinking about different constructs, such as Glasl's conflict escalation model (1994) (in Einarsen et al., 2020a, p. 35), Andersson and Pearson's spiral of incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), and Branch, Ramsay & Barker's General Framework of Workplace Bullying (Branch et al., 2021). However, they fall short of critically examining the common ground between constructs of mistreatment. In effect, these models reiterate the delineation between construct definitions. Due to pro-construct bias, the models have limited ability to test the dominant conceptualisations in the literature.

Engaging with COR theory and SIT/SCT challenged me to identify what is primary to the concept of interpersonal mistreatment and how the concept of interpersonal mistreatment inter-acts with these wider theories of human behaviour. These theories tested assumptions in the interpersonal literature in different ways and highlighted new ways of considering the phenomenon. However, the theoretical 'home' of interpersonal mistreatment research may well be with a different theoretical frame altogether, such as communications theory (Avtgis

& Rancer, 2010; Rancer & Avtgis, 2006) or a theory of human aggression (Archer, 2009; Corning & Corning, 1972; DeWall et al., 2011; Hogg et al., 2007).

9.4 Tactics – how a behaviour is enacted

Behavioural tactics were identified in Study 1 as the potential ways a behavioural item can be enacted. Tactics provide the theoretical space to map out similarities, differences and co-occurrence without falling into prior arguments about definitional boundaries. Using the concept of behavioural tactics, we can reconcile how one behaviour can be part of the measure for multiple constructs of interpersonal mistreatment.

Tactics also offer an alternate basis for grouping behavioural experiences. For example, Ferris et al.'s conceptualization of ostracism is operationalised as a single tactic construct. The WOS is a good example of a measurement tool that is focused on a particular behavioural tactic, and may be an alternative way to group and theorise about experiences of interpersonal mistreatment compared to the array of defined constructs currently in the literature.

Furthermore, tactics can provide an alternate continuum to describe how interpersonal mistreatment intensifies based on tactics. A hierarchy of intensification could move from covert and indirect behaviours, to behaviours that involved third parties (such as ridicule) or left some form of record such as gossip and electronically facilitated behaviours, through to overt versions of any behaviours. Using this hierarchy, overt rudeness would be an indication of a severely abusive workplace.

Further work is needed on the interplay between behavioural tactics and defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. By applying tactics thinking to constructs of interpersonal mistreatment, the theoretical gaps in our literatures can be engaged without necessarily generating new definitions or creating new constructs.

9.5 Directions for future research

Directions for future research involve leaning into theory to challenge our conceptualisations of interpersonal mistreatment and further articulate a base construct of interpersonal mistreatment. Future research design should address the theoretical and applied characteristics of the base construct and how it relates to their investigation. For example, SIT/SCT provide a basis for understanding interpersonal mistreatment as purposive behaviour. Using these theories we can ask when is interpersonal mistreatment beneficial for the instigator, and when does it become counter productive?

Some variations on a base construct of interpersonal mistreatment will be helpful for organisations and individuals to recognise and respond the problem. The question is how many variations, and on what bases do they share similarity?

One more focused avenue of future research is to identify the elements of interpersonal mistreatment that signify a deteriorating workplace culture. In this study, tactics, number and recurrence of behaviours can act as intensifiers. Tactics that may indicate intensification include overt, ridiculing, physically aggressive behaviours, and sexualised behaviours. In addition, based on the cluster analysis findings, the number of instigators is also likely to be a hallmark of intense mistreatment in the workplace.

From a technical point of view, longitudinal and qualitative research is needed to investigate the development of the mistreatment over time, particularly in respect to co-occurrence of behaviours.

9.6 Summary

Building on a small literature that critiques construct proliferation, this research sought to investigate the theoretical, methodological and experiential commonalities between defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. With this aim I examined similar constructs in Study 1 and dissimilar constructs in Study 2.

Using latent thematic document analysis, the first study examined the similarities and differences of the definitions, behavioural measures, and validation logic of four similar

constructs. Using cluster analysis of behavioural data, the second study investigated how behaviours from very different constructs (bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, cyber bullying) co-occurred with each other in an applied workplace setting.

The findings show little support for maintaining the current array of separately defined constructs of interpersonal mistreatment. Similar constructs are found to have extensive commonality, and experientially dissimilar constructs were found to co-occur.

I propose a way forward in three avenues of work. (i) Future research needs to acknowledge the commonality that is a feature across the different constructs of workplace interpersonal mistreatment as a strength rather than as a weakness or a threat to single constructs. We need to explore the existence of a base construct of interpersonal mistreatment that accounts for these commonalities. Central elements identified in this thesis are the instigators' derogatory and undermining use of power against a target and the inherently interpersonal nature of the phenomenon. A further potential element of the base construct is the experience of manipulation and exclusion. I argue that these basic common elements can be a strength in our theorising of interpersonal mistreatment, helping us related constructs to each other in a positive way. Research that pursues a focus on one construct will be challenged to demonstrate a substantive variation to these three basic elements and that substantive variation needs to have both a theoretical and measurable difference to the base construct.

(ii) Definitions currently carry too much of the theoretical burden, effectively doing the work of theory. Scholars in the field need to engage more critically with meta theories to expand our thinking beyond the definitions that currently exist. In this thesis, Social Identity Theory and Self Categorisation Theory provide a framework to understand instigators' motivations and expand that to consider the functionality of workplace interpersonal mistreatment with respect to individual and group identity. The Conservation of Resources theory provided the framework to understand the targets' responses to mistreatment as following a common pattern for exposure to stress, identified through the common nomological net used across constructs in Study 1.

(iii) Behavioural tactics, that is the potential ways that a behaviour can be enacted, provide a mechanism for relating the current array of defined interpersonal mistreatment constructs to each. Furthermore, tactics provide an alternative to construct definitions that is independent to non-behavioural elements. Using tactics can remove the tensions between many construct definitions and the behavioural item scale used to measure them.

10 References

AHRC. (2012). *Working without fear: Results of the sexual harassment national telephone survey 2012*. A. H. R. Commission. www.humanrights.gov.au/about/publications

Akram, Z., Li, Y., & Akram, U. (2019). When Employees are Emotionally Exhausted Due to Abusive Supervision. A Conservation-of-Resources Perspective. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, *16*(18). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16183300

Alharahsheh, H. H., & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global academic journal of humanities and social sciences*, *2*(3), 39-43.

Alola, U. V., Olugbade, O. A., Avci, T., & Öztüren, A. (2019). Customer incivility and employees' outcomes in the hotel: Testing the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *29*, 9-17.

Alrawadieh, Z., Alrawadieh, D. D., Olya, H. G., Bayram, G. E., & Kahraman, O. C. (2023). Sexual harassment, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction of female tour guides: The effects of social and organizational support. In *Gender and Tourism Sustainability* (pp. 186-204). Routledge.

Andersson, L. M., & Pearson, C. M. (1999). Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace. *Academy of Management. The Academy of Management Review*, *24*(3), 452-471.

Aquino, K., & Lamertz, K. (2004). A relational model of workplace victimization: social roles and patterns of victimization in dyadic relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*(6), 1023-1034. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.6.1023

Aquino, K., & Thau, S. (2009). Workplace victimization: aggression from the target's perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *60*, 717-741.

Aquino, K., Tripp, T. M., & Bies, R. J. (2006). Getting Even or Moving On? Power, Procedural Justice, and Types of Offense as Predictors of Revenge, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Avoidance in Organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *91*(3), 653-668. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.3.653

Archer, J. (2009). The nature of human aggression. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, *32*(4), 202-208. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2009.04.001

Australia, S. W. (2022). *Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work: Code of Practice*. Retrieved from www.swa.gov.au

Australia, S. W. (2024). *Our Data. Your Stories. Key Work Health and Safety Statistics Australia 2024*. https://data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/insights/key-whs-stats-2024#heading2

Avtgis, T. A., & Rancer, A. S. (2010). *Arguments, aggression, and conflict : new directions in theory and research* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203855423

Baharom, M. N., Sharfuddin, M., & Iqbal, J. (2017). A systematic review on the deviant workplace behavior. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, *5*(3), 1-8.

Barling, J., Dupré, K. E., & Kelloway, E. K. (2009). Predicting Workplace Aggression and Violence. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *60*(1), 671-692. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163629

Baron, R. A., & Neuman, J. H. (1996). Workplace violence and workplace aggression: Evidence on their relative frequency and potential causes. *Aggressive behavior*, *22*(3), 161-173. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1098-2337(1996)22:3<161::AID-AB1>3.0.CO;2-Q

Baron, R. A., Neuman, J. H., & Geddes, D. (1999). Social and personal determinants of workplace aggression: Evidence for the impact of perceived injustice and the Type A

Behavior Pattern. *Aggressive behavior*, *25*(4), 281-296. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1098-2337(1999)25:4<281::AID-AB4>3.0.CO;2-J
Bennett, R. J., Aquino, K., Reed, A., II, & Thau, S. (2005). The Normative Nature of Employee Deviance and the Impact of Moral Identity. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 107-125). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-005
Bennett, R. J., & Robinson, S. L. (2000). Development of a Measure of Workplace Deviance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(3), 349-360.
Betancourt, A. C. (2016). Do Cyber Victimization and Traditional Victimization Form Separate Factors? Evidence from a Preliminary Study. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, *6*(4), 296-300. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJIET.2016.V6.703
Bhattacharjee, A., & Sarkar, A. (2024). Abusive supervision: a systematic literature review. *Management review quarterly*, *74*(1), 1-34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-022-00291-8
Bies, R. J., & Tripp, T. M. (2005). The Study of Revenge in the Workplace: Conceptual, Ideological, and Empirical Issues. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 65-81). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-003
Blau, G., & Andersson, L. (2005). Testing a measure of instigated workplace incivility. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *78*(4), 595.
Bowling, N. A., & Beehr, T. A. (2006). Workplace Harassment from the Victim's Perspective: A Theoretical Model and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *91*, 998-1012.
Branch, S., Ramsay, S., & Barker, M. (2013). Workplace Bullying, Mobbing and General Harassment: A Review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *15*(3), 280-299. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2012.00339.x
Branch, S., Ramsay, S., Sheehan, M., & Barker, M. (2004). Us and Them: Understanding Upwards Bullying through the lens of Social Identity Theory. ANZAM 2004, People First-Serving Our Stakeholders,
Branch, S., Shallcross, L., Barker, M., Ramsay, S., & Murray, J. P. (2021). Theoretical Frameworks That Have Explained Workplace Bullying: Retracing Contributions Across the Decades. In P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, G. Notelaers, & C. Rayner (Eds.), *Concepts, Approaches and Methods* (pp. 87-130). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0134-6_4
Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
Bunk, J. A., Karabin, J., & Lear, T. (2011). Understanding Why Workers Engage in Rude Behaviors: A Social Interactionist Perspective. *Current Psychology*, *30*(1), 74-80. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-011-9102-5
Busby, L., Patrick, L., & Gaudine, A. (2022). Upwards Workplace Bullying: A Literature Review. *SAGE Open*, *January-March 2022*, 1–14 SAGE and Open Access pages (https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/open-access-at-sage).
Busby, L., Patrick, L., & Gaudine, A. (2022). Upwards Workplace Bullying: A Literature Review. *SAGE Open*, *12*(1), 21582440221085008. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221085008
Buss, A. H. (1961). *The psychology of aggression*. Wiley.
Choi, J., & Park, M. (2019). Effects of nursing organisational culture on face‐to‐face bullying and cyberbullying in the workplace. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *28*(13-14), 2577-2588. https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14843

Coffey, A. (2013). Analysing documents. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 367-379). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446282243
Corning, P. A., & Corning, C. H. (1972). Toward a general theory of violent aggression. *Social Science Information*, *11*(3-4), 7-35. https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847201100301
Cortina, L. M. (2008). Unseen Injustice: Incivility as Modern Discrimination in Organizations. *The Academy of Management Review*, *33*(1), 55-75.
Cortina, L. M., & Areguin, M. A. (2021). Putting People Down and Pushing Them Out: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *8*(Volume 8, 2021), 285-309. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-055606
Cortina, L. M., Kabat-Farr, D., Leskinen, E. A., Huerta, M., & Magley, V. J. (2013). Selective Incivility as Modern Discrimination in Organizations: Evidence and Impact. *Journal of Management*, *39*(6), 1579-1605.
Cortina, L. M., Kabat-Farr, D., Magley, V. J., & Nelson, K. (2017). Researching rudeness: The past, present, and future of the science of incivility. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *22*(3), 299.
Cortina, L. M., Magley, V. J., Williams, J. H., & Langhout, R. D. (2001). Incivility in the Workplace: Incidence and Impact. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *6*(1), 64-80.
Crawshaw, L. (2009). Workplace bullying? Mobbing? Harassment? Distraction by a thousand definitions. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, *61*(3), 263-267. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016590
Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE Publications.
Cunningham, G. B., Bergman, M. E., & Miner, K. N. (2014). Interpersonal Mistreatment of Women in the Workplace. *Sex Roles*, *71*(1), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0398-0
D'Cruz, P., & Noronha, E. (2021). Mapping "Varieties of Workplace Bullying": The Scope of the Field. In P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, G. Notelaers, & C. Rayner (Eds.), *Concepts, Approaches and Methods* (pp. 3-53). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0134-6_1
D'Cruz, P., Noronha, E., & Lutgen-Sandvik, P. (2018). Power, subjectivity and context in workplace bullying, emotional abuse and harassment: insights from postpositivism. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *13*(1), 2-9. https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-12-2017-1587
Danziger, K. (1985). The Methodological Imperative in Psychology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, *15*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/004839318501500101
Defence, A. D. o. (2023). *Women in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) 2021-2022 Ten Years in Review*. https://www.education.gov.au/about-department/corporate-reporting/annual-reports
DeWall, C. N., Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2011). The General Aggression Model. *Psychology of Violence 1*(3). https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023842.
Dhanani, Lindsay Y., & Bogart, Sean M. (2025). Mapping the Mistreatment Landscape: An Integrative Review and Reconciliation of Workplace Mistreatment Constructs. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2876
Dhanani, L. Y., & LaPalme, M. L. (2019). It's Not Personal: A Review and Theoretical Integration of Research on Vicarious Workplace Mistreatment. *Journal of Management*, *45*(6), 2322-2351. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318816162
Duncan, N., & Rivers, I. (2013). *Bullying : Experiences and Discourses of Sexuality and Gender* (I. Rivers & N. Duncan, Eds.). Taylor & Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=1105880
Durand, C. (2016). Surveys and society. In *The SAGE Handbook of Survey Methodology*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957893

Ehman, A. C., & Gross, A. M. (2019). Sexual cyberbullying: Review, critique, & future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *44*, 80-87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.11.001

Einarsen, S. (1999). The nature and causes of bullying at work. *International Journal of Manpower*, *20*(1/2), 16-27. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437729910268588

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Notelaers, G. (2009). Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: Validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised. *Work & Stress*, *23*(1), 24-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370902815673

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C. (2020a). The concept of bullying and harassment at work: The European tradition. In *Bullying and harassment in the workplace developments in theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3-39).

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

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., & Cooper, C. L. (2020b). *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace : Theory, Research and Practice*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Einarsen, S., & Raknes, B. I. (1997). Harassment in the workplace and the victimization of men. *Violence and victims*, *12*(3), 247.

Einarsen, S., & Skogstad, A. (1996). Bullying at work: Epidemiological findings in public and private organizations. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *5*(2), 185-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/13594329608414854

Escartín, J., Vranjes, I., Baillien, E., & Notelaers, G. (2021). Workplace Bullying and Cyberbullying Scales: An Overview. In P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, G. Notelaers, & C. Rayner (Eds.), *Concepts, Approaches and Methods* (pp. 325-368). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0134-6_10

Evans, C. B. R., & Chapman, M. V. (2014). Bullied Youth: The Impact of Bullying Through Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Name Calling. *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, *84*(6), 644-652. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000031

Everitt, B. S., Landau, S., Leese, M., & Stahl, D. (2011). *Cluster Analysis, 5th Edition* (1 ed.). Wiley. http://anu.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwnZ1NS8NAEIYHbS-K4De2tpIfYJrsbrZJTh5qiyDSS-9lZ7NBofTQD4_97c7ki8aDB89Dlk0Wkmcm874DoOQo9H-9E7I4sU4hwbmwYUopBQsurUVE4v_ERu3ZMGWrTjH5q6oPjHhO5WrV_EYtzB64dh4cgsJDJ2Y9QhSp4MVsTqErNaXpHejO56_T96bmQrkgG74VwvTqgrQ24akXYMtQk1OeevSZmV2CrXf0_bVhYceRMLhsuw4aA8d_7_sKuo4VDtdw4tY3cP7RGLdub2E4We3ZOsGrzUqePb379KZZ0dI1B4vZdDF586sJCv6WyMofa5GMlbPJ2GbSpFajSG2IDAHsEklgrelEMqK2xOUalSMaMzERHqY2xyhV93BhuNF-vSsEedkDeAKjEI3R0iUiimnVHC2G0mnH6KFVDwbl81tylrBdimXrPnvQb4Vbwf5fwUc4K-u50pdiAJ3dZu-GhBTr_VN1zj_eiK26

Fahie, D., & Dunne, G. (2021). Standing by or Standing Up?—How Philosophy Can (In)form Our Understanding of Bystander Behaviours in Workplace Bullying Dynamics. *Societies (Basel, Switzerland)*, *11*(2), 28. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11020028

Fahie, D., & McGillicuddy, D. (2021). The (Un)Questionable Challenges of Sample Access, Recruitment and Retention in Contemporary Workplace Bullying Research. In P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, G. Notelaers, & C. Rayner (Eds.), *Concepts, Approaches and Methods* (pp. 555-584). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0134-6_19

Felson, R. B. (2009). Is violence natural, unnatural, or rational? *The British Journal of Sociology*, *60*(3), 577-585. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01257.x

Felson, R. B. (2018). *A Social Interactionist Approach to Violent Crime*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.467

Felson, R. B., & Tedeschi, J. T. (1993). Social interactionist perspectives on aggression and violence: An introduction. In R. B. Felson & J. T. Tedeschi (Eds.), *Aggression and violence: social interactionist perspectives* (pp. 1 - 10). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10123-000

Ferris, D. L., Brown, D. J., Berry, J. W., & Lian, H. (2008). The Development and Validation of the Workplace Ostracism Scale. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(6), 1348-1366. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012743

Fischer, T., Tian, A. W., Lee, A., & Hughes, D. J. (2021). Abusive supervision: A systematic review and fundamental rethink. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *32*(6), 101540. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2021.101540

Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. (Eds.). (2005). *Counterproductive work behaviour: Investigations of actors and targets*. American Psychological Association.

Francisco, S. M., Veiga Simão, A. M., Ferreira, P. C., & Martins, M. J. d. D. (2015). Cyberbullying: The hidden side of college students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *43*(0), 167-182. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.10.045

Galanaki, E., & Papalexandris, N. (2013). Measuring workplace bullying in organisations. *International journal of human resource management*, *24*(11), 2107-2130. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2012.725084

Gazali, G., & Zainurrafiqi, Z. (2023). The Effect of Abusive Supervision on Leadership Identification and Customer Orientation and Its Impact on Job Performance. *Integrated Journal of Business and Economics*, *7*(2), 404-417.

Ging, D., & Neary, A. (2019). Gender, Sexuality, and Bullying Special Issue Editorial. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, *1*(4), 227-230. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-019-00053-3

GlasØ, L., Matthiesen, S. B., Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2007). Do targets of workplace bullying portray a general victim personality profile? *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *48*(4), 313-319. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.2007.00554.x

Glomb, T. M., & Liao, H. (2003). Interpersonal Aggression in Work Groups: Social Influence, Reciprocal, and Individual. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *46*(4), 20. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040640

González-Chica, D. A., Licinio, J., Musker, M., Wong, M., Bowden, J., Hay, P., Chittleborough, C., & Stocks, N. (2019). Bullying and sexual abuse and their association with harmful behaviours, antidepressant use and health-related quality of life in adulthood: A population-based study in South Australia. *BMC public health*, *19*(1), 26-26. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-6367-8

Grimard, C. M., & Lee, R. T. (2020). Cross-cultural perspectives of workplace bullying. In *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace* (pp. 435-454). CRC Press.

Gupta, P., Gupta, U., & Wadhwa, S. (2020). Known and Unknown Aspects of Workplace Bullying: A Systematic Review of Recent Literature and Future Research Agenda. *Human Resource Development Review*, *19*(3), 263-308. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484320936812

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (8 ed.). Cengage Learning, Andover.

Hair, J. F., Gabriel, M. L., da Silva, D., & Braga, S. J. (2019). Development and validation of attitudes measurement scales: fundamental and practical aspects. *RAUSP Management Journal*, *54*(4), 490-507. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/RAUSP-05-2019-0098

Halbesleben, J. R., Neveu, J.-P., Paustian-Underdahl, S. C., & Westman, M. (2014). Getting to the “COR” understanding the role of resources in conservation of resources theory. *Journal of Management*, *40*(5), 1334-1364.

Hall, G. B., Dollard, M. F., & Coward, J. (2010). Psychosocial safety climate: Development of the PSC-12. *International journal of stress management*, *17*(4), 353.

Han, S., Harold, C. M., Oh, I. S., Kim, J. K., & Agolli, A. (2021). A meta‐analysis integrating 20 years of workplace incivility research: Antecedents, consequences, and boundary

conditions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *43*(3), 497-523. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2568
Harris, N. (2011). Shame, ethical identity and conformity: Lessons from research on the psychology of social influence. In S. Karstedt, I. Loader, & H. Strang (Eds.), *Oñati International Series in Law and Society : Emotions, Crime and Justice* (pp. 194-209). Hart Publishing Ltd. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/anuau/docDetail.action?docID=10502086
Haslam, A. S. (2004). The social identity approach. In *Psychology in organizations: the social identity approach* (2nd ed., pp. 17-39). SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446278819
He, E., Hao, H., Pan, K., Li, X., & Zhao, X. (2024). Analysing bully‐victim formation through symbolic interactionism: A case study in China. *Child & Family Social Work*. https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.13151
Heil, J. (2003). Introduction. In *From an Ontological Point of View*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/Retrieved 17 Mar. 2017, from http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0199259747.001.0001/acprof-9780199259748-chapter-1.
Hershcovis, M. S. (2011). "Incivility, social undermining, bullying…oh my!": A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *32*(3), 499-519. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.689
Hershcovis, M. S., & Barling, J. (2010). Towards a multi-foci approach to workplace aggression: A meta-analytic review of outcomes from different perpetrators. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *31*(1), 24-44. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.621
Hershcovis, M. S., Cortina, L. M., & Robinson, S. L. (2020). Social and situational dynamics surrounding workplace mistreatment: Context matters. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *41*(8), 699-705. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2479
Hershcovis, M. S., & Reich, T. C. (2013). Integrating workplace aggression research: Relational, contextual, and method considerations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *34*(S1), 26-42. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1886
Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Kelly, C. (2014). Postmodernist approaches to mixed methods research. In *Mixed Methods Research* (pp. 154 - 173). Guilford Press.
Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: a new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American psychologist*, *44*(3), 513.
Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P., & Westman, M. (2018). Conservation of Resources in the Organizational Context: The Reality of Resources and Their Consequences. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *5*(1), 103-128. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104640
Hodgins, M., MacCurtain, S., & Mannix-McNamara, P. (2020). Power and inaction: why organizations fail to address workplace bullying. *International journal of workplace health management*, *13*(3), 265-290. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-10-2019-0125
Hoel, H., Cooper, C. L., Einarsen, S. V., Zapf, D., Cooper, C. L., Einarsen, S. V., & Hoel, H. (2020). Organizational Effects of Workplace Bullying. In (3 ed., pp. 209-234). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1201/9780429462528-7
Hogg, M., Cooper, J., Anderson, C. A., & Huesmann, L. R. (2007). *Human Aggression: A Social-Cognitive View* The SAGE Handbook of Social Psychology: Concise Student Edition,
Hothersall, S. J. (2019). Epistemology and social work: enhancing the integration of theory, practice and research through philosophical pragmatism. *European Journal of Social Work*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2018.1499613
Hur, W. M., Kim, B. S., & Park, S. J. (2015). The relationship between coworker incivility, emotional exhaustion, and organizational outcomes: The mediating role of emotional exhaustion. *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries*, *25*(6), 701-712.

Jones, C. (2006). Drawing boundaries: Exploring the relationship between sexual harassment, gender and bullying. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *29*(2), 147-158. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2006.03.001
Joye, D., Wolf, C., Smith, T. W., & Fu, Y.-c. (2016). Survey Methodology: Challenges and Principles. In *The SAGE Handbook of Survey Methodology*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957893
Keashly, L., & Harvey, S. (2005). Emotional abuse in the workplace. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behaviour: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 201-235). American Psychological Association.
Keashly, L., Tye-Williams, S., & Jagatic, K. (2020). By Any Other Name: North American Perspectives on Workplace Bullying. In *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace: Theory, Research and Practice* (pp. 55-102).
Keller, R. (2011). The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (SKAD). *Human Studies*, *35*(1), 43-65. https://doi.org/doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10746-011-9175-z
Kelly, L. M., & Cordeiro, M. (2020). Three principles of pragmatism for research on organizational processes. *Methodological Innovations*, *13*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799120937242
Ketchen, D. J., & Shook, C. L. (1996). The application of cluster analysis in strategic management research: an analysis and critique. *Strategic management journal*, *17*(6), 18.
Kim, B. (2024). Workplace violence and harassment: An umbrella review of synthesis studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *78*, 101981. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2024.101981
Kofoed, J., & Ringrose, J. (2012). Travelling and sticky affects: Exploring teens and sexualized cyberbullying through a Butlerian-Deleuzian-Guattarian lens. *Discourse (Abingdon, England)*, *33*(1), 5-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2012.632157
Kuhn, T. S. (2012). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions /Thomas S. Kuhn; with an introductory essay by Ian Hacking* (4 ed.). The University of Chicago Press.
Kunkel, D., Carnevale, J., & Henderson, D. (2015). Examining instrument issues in workplace incivility: measurement or mutation? . *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communication and Conflict*, *19*(1), 102.
Lam, C. K., Walter, F., & Huang, X. (2017). Supervisors' emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision: The moderating roles of perceived subordinate performance and supervisor self‐monitoring. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *38*(8), 1151-1166.
Lampman, C., Phelps, A., Bancroft, S., & Beneke, M. (2009). Contrapower Harassment in Academia: A Survey of Faculty Experience with Student Incivility, Bullying, and Sexual Attention. *Sex Roles*, *60*(5-6), 331-346. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9560-x
Lapierre, L. M., Spector, P. E., & Leck, J. D. (2005). Sexual versus nonsexual workplace aggression and victims' overall job satisfaction: a meta-analysis. *J Occup Health Psychol*, *10*(2), 155-169. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.10.2.155
Latour, B., & Woolgar, S. (1979). *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. Sage Publications.
Lauckner, C., Truszczynski, N., Lambert, D., Kottamasu, V., Meherally, S., Schipani-McLaughlin, A. M., Taylor, E., & Hansen, N. (2019). "Catfishing," cyberbullying, and coercion: An exploration of the risks associated with dating app use among rural sexual minority males. *Journal of gay & lesbian mental health*, *23*(3), 289-306. https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2019.1587729
Law, J. (2009). Seeing Like a Survey. *Cultural Sociology*, *3*(2), 239-256. https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975509105533
Lee, J.-I., Yen, C.-F., Hsiao, R. C., & Hu, H.-F. (2019). Relationships of homophobic bullying during childhood and adolescence with problematic internet and smartphone use in early adulthood among sexual minority men in Taiwan. *Revista de psiquiatria clínica*, *46*(4), 97-102. https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-60830000000203

Leisring, P. A., & Giumetti, G. W. (2014). Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, But Abusive Text Messages Also Hurt: Development and Validation of the Cyber Psychological Abuse Scale. *Partner Abuse*, *5*(3), 323-341. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1946-6560.5.3.323

Leskinen, E. A., Cortina, L. M., & Kabat, D. B. (2011). Gender Harassment: Broadening Our Understanding of Sex-Based Harassment at Work. *Law and human behavior*, *35*(1), 25-39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10979-010-9241-5

Lim, S., & Cortina, L. M. (2005). Interpersonal Mistreatment in the Workplace: The Interface and Impact of General Incivility and Sexual Harassment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*(3), 483.

Lim, S., Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2008). Personal and Workgroup Incivility: Impact on Work and Health Outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(1), 95-107. https://doi.org/DOI Number 10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.95

Linstead, S., Marechal, C., & Griffin, R. W. (2014). Theorizing and researching the dark side of organization. *Organization Studies*, *35*(2), 165-188.

Loh, J., & Snyman, R. (2020). The tangled web: consequences of workplace cyberbullying in adult male and female employees. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *35*(6), 567-584.

Love, C. D. (2012). *Bullying, cyberbullying, incivility, and sexual harassment: A spectrum of interpersonal mistreatment* ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing].

Mackey, J. D., Frieder, R. E., Brees, J. R., & Martinko, M. J. (2017). Abusive Supervision: A Meta-Analysis and Empirical Review. *Journal of Management*, *43*(6), 1940-1965. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315573997

Malik, M. S., & Sattar, S. (2022). Unfolding the ramifications of workplace bullying: An empirical justification of conservation of resource theory in telecommunication sector of Pakistan. *Cogent Business & Management*, *9*(1), 2038343.

Martinko, M. J., Harvey, P., Brees, J. R., & Mackey, J. (2013). A review of abusive supervision research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *34*(S1), S120-S137. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1888

Mikkelsen, E. G., Hansen, Å. M., Persson, R., Byrgesen, M. F., & Hogh, A. (2020). Individual consequences of being exposed to workplace bullying. In *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace* (pp. 163-208).

Monks, C. P., Smith, P. K., Naylor, P., Barter, C., Ireland, J. L., & Coyne, I. (2009). Bullying in Different Contexts: Commonalities, differences and the role of theory. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, *14*(2), 11.

Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained:Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *1*(1), 48-76. https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292462

Morgan, D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a Paradigm for Social Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *20*(8), 1045-1053. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413513733

Neall, A. M., & Tuckey, M. R. (2014). A methodological review of research on the antecedents and consequences of workplace harassment. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *87*(2), 225-257. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12059

Neuman, J. H., & Baron, R. A. (1998). Workplace violence and workplace aggression: Evidence concerning specific forms, potential causes, and preferred targets. *Journal of Management*, *24*(3), 391-419. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(99)80066-X

Neuman, J. H., & Baron, R. A. (2005). Aggression in the Workplace: A Social-Psychological Perspective. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 13-40). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-001

Nielsen, M. B., Bjørkelo, B., Notelaers, G., & Einarsen, S. (2010). Sexual Harassment: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Gender Differences Assessed by Three Different Estimation Methods. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *19*(3), 252-274. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771003705056

Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2012). Outcomes of exposure to workplace bullying: A meta-analytic review. *Work and Stress*, *26*(4), 309.
Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. V. (2018). What we know, what we do not know, and what we should and could have known about workplace bullying: An overview of the literature and agenda for future research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *42*, 71-83. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.06.007
Nielsen, M. B., Matthiesen, S. B., & Einarsen, S. (2010). The impact of methodological moderators on prevalence rates of workplace bullying. A meta‐analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *83*(4), 955-979.
Nielsen, M. B., Matthiesen, S. B., & Einarsen, S. (2011). The impact of methodological moderators on prevalence rates of workplace bullying. A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *83*(4), 955-979.
Nielsen, M. B., Noetlaers, G., & Einarsen, S. V. (2020). Methodological issues in the measurement of workplace bullying. In S. V. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace: Theory, Research and Practice* (pp. 235-265). CRC Press.
Nielsen, M. B., Skogstad, A., Matthiesen, S. B., Glasø, L., Aasland, M. S., Notelaers, G., & Einarsen, S. (2009). Prevalence of workplace bullying in Norway: Comparisons across time and estimation methods. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *18*(1), 81-101.
Notelaers, G., Einarsen, S., De Witte, H., & Vermunt, J. K. (2006). Measuring exposure to bullying at work: The validity and advantages of the latent class cluster approach. *Work & Stress*, *20*(4), 289-302. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370601071594
Notelaers, G., Van der Heijden, B., Hoel, H., & Einarsen, S. (2019). Measuring bullying at work with the short-negative acts questionnaire: identification of targets and criterion validity. *Work and Stress*, *33*(1), 58-75. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2018.1457736
Notelaers, G., & Van der Heijden, B. I. J. M. (2021). Construct Validity in Workplace Bullying and Harassment Research. In P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, G. Notelaers, & C. Rayner (Eds.), *Concepts, Approaches and Methods* (pp. 369-424). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0134-6_11
Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: what we know and what we can do*. Blackwell.
Ombudsman, A. G. F. W. (2014). *Bullying & harassment*.
Organisation, W. H., & Organization, I. L. (2022). *Mental health at work: policy brief*. Retrieved from www.ilo.org/labadmin-osh
Organization, I. L. (2020). *Safe and healthy working environments free from violence and harassment*. International Labour Office
Ormerod, R. (2006). The history and ideas of pragmatism. *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *57*(8), 892-909. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jors.2602065
Page, E., Shute, R., & McLachlan, A. (2015). A Self-Categorization Theory Perspective on Adolescent Boys' Sexual Bullying of Girls. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *30*(3), 371-383. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514535096
Patterson, E., Branch, S., Barker, M., & Ramsay, S. (2018). Playing with power. Examinations of types of power used by staff members in workplace bullying – a qualitative interview study. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *13*(1), 32-52.
Pearson, C. M., Andersson, L. M., & Porath, C. L. (2005). Workplace Incivility. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 177-200). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-008
Potter, R. E., Dollard, M. F., & Tuckey, M. R. (2016). *Bullying and Harassment in Australian Workplaces: Results from the Australian Workplace Barometer Project 2014/2015*. S. W. Australia.

Provenzano, D. A., & Boroughs, M. S. (2021). Substance Use and Sexual Risk Taking in Emerging Adults with a History of Bullying Victimization. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-020-00087-y

Quine, L. (1999). Workplace bullying in the NHS community trust: staff questionnaire survey. *British Medical Journal*, *318*, 228-232.

Ramsay, S., Troth, A., & Branch, S. (2011). Work-place bullying: A group processes framework. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *84*(4), 799-816. https://doi.org/10.1348/2044-8325.002000

Ramsay, S., Troth, A., & Branch, S. (2011). Workplace bullying through the lens of social psychology: A group level analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *84*(4), 799-816.

Rancer, A., & Avtgis, T. A. (2006). *Argumentative and Aggressive Communication: Theory, Research, and Application* (1 ed.). SAGE Publications, Incorporated. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452225722

Rayner, C., & Keashly, L. (2005). Bullying at Work: A Perspective From Britain and North America. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets.* (pp. 271-296). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-011

Reich, T. C., & Hershcovis, M. S. (2015). Observing workplace incivility. *The Journal of applied psychology*, *100*(1), 203-215. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036464

Restubog, S. L. D., Scott, K. L., & Zagenczyk, T. J. (2011). When Distress Hits Home: The Role of Contextual Factors and Psychological Distress in Predicting Employees' Responses to Abusive Supervision. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*(4), 713–729.

Reynolds, K. J., Turner, J. C., Branscombe, N. R., Mavor, K. I., Bizumic, B., & Subašić, E. (2010). Interactionism in personality and social psychology: An integrated approach to understanding the mind and behaviour. *European Journal of Personality*, *24*(5), 458-482. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.782

Robinson, S. L., & Bennett, R. J. (1995). A Typology of Deviant Workplace Behaviors: A Multidimensional Scaling Study. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(2), 555-572.

Rogers, K.-A. (1998). *Toward an integrative understanding of workplace mistreatment* University of Guelph].

Rospenda, K. M., & Richman, J. A. (2004). The factor structure of generalized workplace harassment. *Violence and victims*, *19*(2), 221-239.

Rospenda, K. M., Richman, J. A., Wislar, J. S., & Flaherty, J. A. (2000). Chronicity of sexual harassment and generalized work-place abuse: effects on drinking outcomes. *Addiction*, *95*(12). https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1360-0443.2000.9512180510.x

Rudert, S., Greifeneder, R., & Williams, K. (2019). *Current Directions in Ostracism, Social Exclusion and Rejection Research*. Taylor & Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=5751819

Salin, D. (2018). Workplace Bullying and Gender: An Overview of Empirical Findings. In P. D'Cruz, E. Noronha, C. Caponecchia, J. Escartín, D. Salin, & M. R. Tuckey (Eds.), *Dignity and Inclusion at Work* (pp. 1-31). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5338-2_12-1

Salin, D., & Hoel, H. (2013). Workplace bullying as a gendered phenomenon. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *28*(3), 235-251. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02683941311321187

Samnani, A.-K. (2013). Embracing New Directions in Workplace Bullying Research: A Paradigmatic Approach. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *22*(1), 26-36.

Samnani, A.-K. (2015). Paradigmatic and methodological approaches. In M. Omari & M. Paull (Eds.), *Workplace Abuse, Incivility and Bullying: Methodological and Cultural Perspectives* (1 ed., pp. 7-22). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315739724-2

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students* (5th ed.). Prentice Hall.
Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). Making Paradigms Meaningful in Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *10*(4), 319-334. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689815575861
Shute, R., Owens, L., & Slee, P. (2007). Everyday Victimization of Adolescent Girls by Boys: Sexual Harassment, Bullying or Aggression? *Sex Roles*, *58*(7-8), 477-489. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9363-5
Smith, P., & Phillips, T. (2004). Emotional and behavioural responses to everyday incivility: challenging the fear/avoidance paradigm [Paper in special issue: Fear and Loathing in the New Century. Anleu, Sharyn Roach; Martin, Bill; Zadoroznyj, Maria (eds).]. *Journal of Sociology*, *40*(4), 378-399. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783304048382
Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. (2005). The Stressor-Emotion Model of Counterproductive Work Behavior. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 151-174). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-007
Spector, P. E., & Jex, S. M. (1998). Development of Four Self-Report Measures of Job Stressors and Strain: Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale, Organizational Constraints Scale, Quantitative Workload Inventory, and Physical Symptoms Inventory. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *3*(4), 356-367. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.3.4.356
Spector, P. E., Zhou, Z. E., & Che, X. X. (2014). Nurse exposure to physical and nonphysical violence, bullying, and sexual harassment: A quantitative review. *International journal of nursing studies*, *51*(1), 72-84. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2013.01.010
Stewart, R. W., Drescher, C. F., Maack, D. J., Ebesutani, C., & Young, J. (2014). The Development and Psychometric Investigation of the Cyberbullying Scale. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *29*(12), 2218-2238. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513517552
Strandmark, M., & Hallberg, L.-M. (2007). Being Rejected and Expelled from the Workplace: Experiences of Bullying in the Public Service Sector. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *4*(1-2), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780880701473359
Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2012). Common "Core" Characteristics of Mixed Methods Research: A Review of Critical Issues and Call for Greater Convergence. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *56*(6), 774-788. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211433795
Tedeschi, J. T. (1993). Power, coercive actions, and aggression. *International Review of Sociology*, *4*(1-2), 183-211.
Tedeschi, J. T., & Felson, R. B. (1994). *Violence, aggression & coercive actions*. American Psychological Association.
Teo, S. T., Nguyen, D., Trevelyan, F., Lamm, F., & Boocock, M. (2021). Workplace bullying, psychological hardiness, and accidents and injuries in nursing: A moderated mediation model. *PLOS One*, *16*(1), e0244426.
Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of abusive supervision. *Academy of management journal*, *43*(2), 178-190.
Tepper, B. J. (2007). Abusive supervision in work organizations: Review, synthesis, and research agenda [Journal]. *Journal of Management*, *33*, 261-289.
Tepper, B. J., & Henle, C. A. (2011). A case for recognizing distinctions among constructs that capture interpersonal mistreatment in work organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *32*(3), 487-498. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.688
Tepper, B. J., Simon, L., & Park, H. M. (2017). Abusive supervision. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *4*(1), 123-152.
Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2013). Grounded theory and theoretical coding. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 153-169). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446282243

Trepte, S., & Loy, L. (2017). Social Identity Theory and Self‐Categorization Theory. In P. Rössler, C. A. Hoffner, & L. v. Zoonen (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0088

Turner-Moore, T., Milnes, K., & Gough, B. (2021). Bullying in Five European Countries: Evidence for Bringing Gendered Phenomena Under the Umbrella of 'Sexual Bullying' in Research and Practice. *Sex Roles*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-021-01254-1

Turner, J. C. (2004). What the social identity approach is and why it matters. In A. S. Haslam (Ed.), *Psychology in Organizations : The Social Identity Approach* (2 ed., pp. xvii-xx). SAGE Publications. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=254590

Turner, J. C., & Onorato, R. S. (1999). Social identity, personality and the self-cocept: A self-categorization perspective. In T. R. Tyler, R. M. Kramer, & O. P. John (Eds.), *The Psychology of Self* (pp. 11-46). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Turner, J. C., & Reynolds, K. J. (2012). Self-Categorisation Theory. In P. A. M. V. Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology: Volume 2*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/doi: 10.4135/9781446249222.n46

Ünal, A. F., Warren, D. E., & Chen, C. C. (2012). The Normative Foundations of Unethical Supervision in Organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *107*(1), 5-19. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41476226

https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10551-012-1300-z.pdf

Van De Griend, K. M., & Messias, D. K. H. (2014). Expanding the Conceptualization of Workplace Violence: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice. *Sex Roles*, *71*(1), 33-42. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0353-0

Vanroelen, C., Louckx, F., Moors, G., & Levecque, K. (2010). The clustering of health-related occupational stressors among contemporary wage-earners. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *19*(6), 654-674. https://doi.org/10.1080/13594320903043393

Volk, A. A., Dane, A. V., & Marini, Z. A. (2014). What is bullying? A theoretical redefinition. *Developmental Review*, *34*(4), 16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2014.09.001

Volk, A. A., Veenstra, R., & Espelage, D. L. (2017). So you want to study bullying? Recommendations to enhance the validity, transparency, and compatibility of bullying research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *36*(Supplement C), 43. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.07.003

Vranjes, I., Elst, T. V., Griep, Y., De Witte, H., & Baillien, E. (2023). What Goes Around Comes Around: How Perpetrators of Workplace Bullying Become Targets Themselves. *Group & Organization Management*, *48*(4), 1135-1172. https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011221143263

Vranjes, I., & Lyubykh, Z. (2021). Workplace Mistreatment: A Review and Agenda for Research. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Busienss and Managment* (pp. 41). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.119

Vranjes, I., Notelaers, G., & Salin, D. (2022). Putting Workplace Bullying in Context: The Role of High-Involvement Work Practices in the Relationship Between Job Demands, Job Resources, and Bullying Exposure. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *27*(1), 136-151. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000315

Walsh, B. M., & Magley, V. J. (2014). An empirical investigation of the relationship among forms of workplace mistreatment. *Violence and victims*, *29*(2), 363-379. https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-12-00172R1

Yamada, D. C., Duffy, M., & Berry, P. A. (2018). Workplace Bullying and Mobbing: Definitions, Terms, and When They Matter. In M. Duffy, D. C. Yamada, & G. Namie (Eds.), *Workplace Bullying and Mobbing in the United States* (Vol. 1, pp. 3-25). Praeger. http://www.worldcat.org/title/workplace-bullying-and-mobbing-in-the-united-states/oclc/993433970?referer=di&ht=edition

Yao, J., Lim, S., Guo, C. Y., Ou, A. Y., & Ng, J. W. X. (2022). Experienced Incivility in the Workplace: A Meta-Analytical Review of its Construct Validity and Nomological

Network. *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, *107*(2), 193-220. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000870

Yvonne Feilzer, M. (2010). Doing Mixed Methods Research Pragmatically: Implications for the Rediscovery of Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *4*(1), 6-16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809349691

Zapf, D., & Einarsen, S. (2005). Mobbing at Work: Escalated Conflicts in Organizations. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets.* (pp. 237-270). American Psychological Association. http://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&CSC=Y&NEWS=N&PAGE=fulltext&D=psbk&AN=2004-19514-010

Zapf, D., & Gross, C. (2001). Conflict escalation and coping with workplace bullying: A replication and extension. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *10*(4), 497-522.