Workplace Bullying: Proven Methodologies to Mitigate the Issue within the Government Contracting Workplace Environment

by

Wendy Jan Kirk

Master of Business Administration
in Business Administration
Arkansas State University
2003

Bachelor of Science
in Finance
Arkansas State University
2000

A dissertation
submitted to the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business at Florida Institute of Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Melbourne, Florida
May, 2017
We the undersigned committee hereby recommend that the attached document be accepted as fulfilling in part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

“Workplace Bullying: Proven Methodologies to Mitigate the Issue within the Government Contracting Workplace Environment”
a dissertation by Wendy Jan Kirk.

________________________________________________________
Darrell Norman Burrell, DHEd
Associate Professor
Bisk College of Business
Dissertation Advisor

________________________________________________________
Kenneth Hanko, J.D.
Assistant Professor
Bisk College of Business

________________________________________________________
Penny Vassar, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Bisk College of Business

________________________________________________________
Zhiqing Zhou, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Psychology

________________________________________________________
Theodore Richardson, Ed.D.
Professor and Dean
Bisk College of Business
Abstract

Title: Workplace Bullying: Proven Methodologies to Mitigate the Issue within the Government Contracting Workplace Environment

Author: Wendy Jan Kirk

Major Advisor: Dr. Darrell Burrell

The purpose of this qualitative study is to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific region of north Alabama, with emphasis given to organizations whose workforce is mixed, consisting of federal government employees as well as contracted staffers.

At the theoretical level, this study aims to consolidate knowledge from Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) in the field of workplace bullying and outline concrete steps and implementable plans for area corporate leadership to implement within their organization. At the practical level this study aims to bring attention to the issue of workplace bullying within the service area and highlight the need for positive change in the local workforce culture.

The hope is also to use the collected data to aid local leadership in dealing effectively with, and potentially eradicating, the issue of workplace bullying in federal government contracting facilities.

Keywords: workplace bullying, mobbing, target, perpetrator, victim, bully, change theory, government contracting workplace
Table of Contents

List of Tables ix
List of Figures xi
Acknowledgement xii
Dedication xiii

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Overview 1
Background and Rationale of the Study 5
Statement of the Problem 7
Purpose of the Study 8
Nature of the Study 10
Definition of Terms 10
Significance of the Study 15
Assumptions and Limitations 17
Scope of the Study 18
Worldview and Design 19
Chapter Summary 21
Organization of the Remainder of the Study 21

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview 23
Statistics 26
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions that Guide the Research</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method for Reviewing the Literature</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method for Analyzing the Literature</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework—Change Leadership</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Leadership</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to Change</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proven Themes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading Change</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Change</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Culture</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Motives</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Studies According to Themes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profiles Regarding Bullying</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Race Relevance</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects on the Organization</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects on the Individual</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal Environment 52
Human Resource Management 55
Effective Mitigation 60
Synthesis 62
Chapter Summary 63

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Overview 64
Organization of the Remainder of the Chapter 64
Ethical Considerations 64
Research Questions 68
Research Design 69
Overview of Research Approach Used in this Study 71
Population of Participants 75
Selection of Participants 76
Instrumentation 77
Procedures 78
Data Collection 79
Data Analysis 82
Reliability and Validity 83
Generalizability 84
Chapter Summary 85
### CHAPTER 4. RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design Compatibility</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Remainder of this Chapter</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Demographics</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Participant Demographics</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Participant Demographics</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Interview Questions</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning Behind Activism</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Workplace Bullying</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interview Questions</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Answer</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question One</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question Two</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question Three</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question Four</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Questions</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Sub-Question One</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Sub-Question Two</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis and Summary of Data</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions to Applied Practice</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the Study</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Implications</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk’s Anti-Bullying Workplace Bullying Model</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A. National Institutes of Health Certification</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B. Introduction Letter/Participant Recruitment Email</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C. Florida Institute of Technology Consent Form</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D. Final Participant Email Thank You</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E. SME Participant Questionnaire</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F. Permission to Use Copyrighted Data and Figures</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1. Statistics Regarding References for this Study  30
Table 2. Description of Participants  93
Table 3. Highest Education Level Achieved Composite  94
Table 4. Gender Breakdown of Participants  94
Table 5. Age Breakdown of Participants  94
Table 6. What Prompted Interest/Work  96
Table 7. Define Workplace Bullying  97
Table 8. Impacts of Workplace Bullying on the Individual  102
Table 9. Impacts of Workplace Bullying on the Organization  105
Table 10. Addressing Workplace Bullying is Important to the Employer  109
Table 11. Addressing Workplace Bullying is Important to the Employee  111
Table 12. Policies Should be in Place to Reduce Workplace Bullying  115
Table 13. Procedures Should be in Place to Reduce Workplace Bullying  118
Table 14. Recommended Training Type  121
Table 15. Mediums of Training  122
Table 16. Timing of Training  122
Table 17. Internal Steps  127
Table 18. External Steps  129
Table 19. Barriers to Implementation  131
Table 20. Communicate the Importance  138
Table 21. Outcomes

Table 22. Roles in the Organization

Table 23. Ensure Accountability

Table 24. Ensure Confidentiality

Table 25. Ensure Reporting

Table 26. Ensure Compliance

Table 27. Participant Responses Linked to Change Management
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>U.S. Workforce Affected</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Bullies are Bosses</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Perpetrator Chart by Gender and Target</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Male versus Female Bullies</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Race and Bullying Experience</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Gender and Job Loss</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Kirk’s Anti-Workplace Bullying Model</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

This study was accomplished with the support of several persons. I would like to personally thank the initial cohort of students of the very first DBA program offered by FIT, for their daily interactions through a time of intense learning and growth beyond imagination. To my special “battle buddies”…all my respect and appreciation: Acolea, Carolyn, Chad, Cheryl, Christine, Dana, Don, Harry, Jennifer, Karen, Kim, LaToya, Leon, Linda, Michelle, “gen-M’ Mike, Mike, Robert, Sheena, Tim, and Willy.

A special word of thanks also to Dr. Emily Vogt who brought out in me the ability to write academically and challenged me daily. Dr. Darrell Burrell, my ever-present Dissertation Committee Chair, provided guidance, encouragement and constant support.

Finally, the decades of work done on this tragic topic must be acknowledged. There have been dozens of researchers working for years to end this epidemic around the globe and the two founders of the Workplace Bullying Institute, Dr.’s Gary and Ruth Namie, should be heralded. None have equaled the work done by these two champions for those disenfranchised by workplace bullying.

Dr. David Yamada and his composing of the Healthy Workplace Bill, along with the works of Dr. Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik, have inspired me to continue to study this phenomenon well into the future.
Dedication

This study is dedicated to my precious family. This work has been made possible by the continuous support for nearly three decades of my husband, Todd. Through countless hours of writing, research, and re-writing, he remained the rock for our children, family, and friends, when I was completely absorbed by a full-time career and doctoral work. His reading, rereading, and editing for content were definitive keys to my success. Todd blesses me with a distinctly different take on issues from myself, which made him a perfect asset in the completion of the many works required for a doctorate. His questioning strategic eye brought a unique and differentiating ability to my work that would not have been there otherwise. I am forever grateful for his insight and input and years of patience during this journey.

This work has also been made possible due to the continuous editing of my grammar, spelling, and “legendary comma misuse” by my delightful daughter, Katelyn. Were it not for her many, many, hours of late night, last minute editing, my papers would simply not have passed muster. I thank her for the sacrifice of her own time needed toward her own collegiate coursework to facilitate success in mine.

An enormous thank you to my son, Jacob is also a must. His understanding and caring nature allowed me to miss many, many, high school, and now college, activities to undertake the rigorous program requirements to earn a doctorate, while also navigating a full-time career. Truth be told, his late night unsolicited PB&J’s
saved me on numerous occasions. His giving nature has the potential to change the
world in whatever dimension he selects. I hope this effort toward a terminal degree
will inspire him to do great work in the career path he chooses for himself.

Aunt Jean, or “second Momma” has served not only as an extraordinary
editor, but among the greatest supporters any human could have. Aunt Loretta has
been three states away, but always calling to check in on the future “Dr.” and her
progress. An enormous thank you must also be stated to my best friends, Dawn and
Tony. Dawn has been with me through thick and thin (in both the literal and
figurative sense) for close to four decades now, keeping me sane (that’s literal) and
serving as the greatest confidant possible. Tony serves as the constant voice of
reason as well as absolute hilarity, just when I need it the most, every time that
“breaking point” was reached in this illustrious process.

Lastly, but most certainly not least, I give thanks to my Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ. It is the enduring gift of faith and belief in God (from my Mother,
Jan), that allowed every single accomplishment in my life. I miss her dearly each
and every day. I pray I can emulate the same enduring faith to my children, Katelyn
and Jacob.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

Workplace bullying is a growing phenomenon in today’s fast-paced business climate. In fact, in 2014, 37 million U.S. workers reported conduct that was abusive and 65.6 million reported being affected by workplace bullying (Namie, 2014). A staggering 27% of adult Americans revealed they directly experienced abusive conduct at their place of work, equating to over a quarter of the working population of the United States (Namie, 2014). Workplace bullying has many consequences that can adversely influence a business’s efficiency, the effectiveness of employees, and an organization’s bottom-line (Namie, 2014).

Gallup’s annual U.S. employee engagement poll states employee disengagement is at an all-time high, at nearly 70% (Adkins, 2016). Consider that American workforce members who are “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” cost businesses in the U.S. between $450 to $550 billion in productivity losses on an annual basis (Adkins, 2016). In conjunction with such staggering disengaged employee numbers, workplace bullying incidents are known to have debilitating human consequences on the workforce as well (Jenkins, Winefield, & Sarris, 2011). Symptoms of those affected range from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), to heart disease, depression, anxiety, lost work and consequently lost wages, behavioral changes, mental illness, and diminished self-esteem; in the most extreme cases, workplace bullying has resulted in work related suicides (Emdal,
As more companies restructure to respond to challenges of globalization, new trends have emerged that include offshoring, downsizing, and the reduction of human resources (Abdulsomad, 2014). The consequences of these organizational shifts often include staff being asked to do more with less, creating atmospheres of mounting pressures to perform at ever-increasing levels of productivity (Abdulsomad, 2014; Office, 2015). These kinds of factors exacerbate the increasing incidents of bullying in the U.S. workplace (Namie, 2014). The literature review within the body of this work informs the reader of the many definitions used in academic research to describe occurrences, outlines various forms of bullying, and highlights the effects of the act on both the organization and the individuals involved.

Other areas were comprehensively explored and reviewed including the current legal environment and potential organizational legal liabilities because of the existence of hostile work cultures and work environments that are not effectively mitigated. The main body of this research focused on the exploration of proven methods to adopt within the workplace to diminish workplace bullying and its business impacts on organizations in north Alabama. It is the researcher’s hope that results of this study’s recommendations are used in organizations with employees consisting of a mixed workforce containing both federal government
employees and contracted employees working side-by-side, as this is a unique labor force existing within the northern region of this state.

The true effects of such staggering incidents of bullying in the U.S. have rippling consequences throughout each individual organization when not adequately addressed (Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2010). The least of which is certainly not just the fiscal costs associated with such manifestations, as outlined in a few examples to follow, but in the negative impact on human capital and the organizations overall.

Reduced productivity and less output from downtrodden workers remaining at their positions, often termed presenteeism, are often a direct result of workplace bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013; Olive & Cangemi, 2015). This phenomenon is generally followed by high turnover rates as individuals leave to pursue organizations where they are valued and feel protected (Olive & Cangemi, 2015; Quinlan, Robertson, Miller, & Robertson-Boersma, 2014). Costs associated with this loss can be astronomical for even one such instance to a corporation when management considers all the associated financial implications (Sutton, 2010).

Another cascading effect of allowing bullying to go unchecked in the organization is a reputation of a hostile work environment in the stakeholder market (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). According to Olive and Cangemi (2015) this can hinder the future of the organization, as recruiting of new and innovative talent harmed by negative workplace reputation where potential employees seek
satisfaction elsewhere. Olive and Cangemi (2015) state professional workers are leaving their jobs at a rate of two million a year due to their perception of hostile work environments and unfair treatment on the job, at a cost of $64 billion to the U.S. economy (p. 21).

Other potential organizational costs associated with workplace bullying are theft, sabotage and legal action taken against the organization (Olive & Cangemi, 2015; Barnes, 2013). Civil suits, unemployment insurance claims, as well as workers’ compensation claims are all actions that take precious resources away from the organization, all because of unhindered bullying (Olive & Cangemi, 2015).

Increased absenteeism due to bullying in the workplace, along with unemployment for those who can no longer cope within the current perceived unsafe work environment, are just two of the negative consequences to the organization noted by Sansone and Sansone (2015), and other researchers in the field, as well (Buttigieg, Bryant, Hanley, & Liu, 2013; Sansone & Sansone, 2015; Vickers, 2014).

McDonald, Brown, and Smith (2015) relate in their research the effects bullying may have on the fiscal health of the overall organization. They concluded the business may encounter direct expenses while defending lawsuits, health-related complaints, and workers’ compensation claims from affected employees (McDonald et al., 2015, p. 28). Indirect financial expenses are also plentiful in the
form of increased turnover rates, worker motivation reduction, health problems, internal sabotage, and absenteeism due to conflicts within the workplace (McDonald et al., p. 28). Aleassa and Megdadi (2014) state a single legal case of workplace bullying can cost a corporation anywhere from $30,000 to $100,000 annually (p. 158). Inaction on the part of management to workplace bullying at all levels in all departments has significant consequences from legal costs to the loss of critical organizational intellectual capital, when innovative employees quit the organization or cease to actively contribute to the level of their abilities (McDonald, Brown, & Smith, 2015).

**Background and Rationale of the Study**

Considering 65.6 million U.S. workers were affected by workplace bullying in 2014 (Namie, 2014), this is an epidemic that must be addressed within our places of work. Fifty-two of the top 100 Federal Prime Contractors, as mentioned by Washington Technology (2016) in 2014 contracted dollars, have a presence located in the northern Alabama workforce region (Washington Technology, 2016). After reviewing the publicly available online presence of the 52 local contractors, the researcher found only two had an anti-bullying policy published for public viewing. One of those corporations had a global presence and locations in more progressive countries whose laws explicitly forbid acts of workplace bullying to protect employees (L-3 Communications Corporation, 2016). A third federal contracting corporation hosted an anti-bullying month in local schools, provided presentation
kits, but did not explicitly state an anti-bullying policy in its viewable documents (IBM, 2016).

Another six corporations had the word “bullying” stated as a bullet point within their code of conduct or harassment policy; however, the term was undefined for both the reader and employee. The remaining 44 top federal defense contractors in 2014 (Washington Technology, 2016), doing business in the local north Alabama region, had no virtual or public acknowledgement of anti-workplace bullying policies on their websites based on this research. In actuality, the six corporations, with only one word representing the widespread costly issue, seriously underestimated the potential effects of workplace bullying on their organizations. Considering that only two of the 52 top federally contracted employers in north Alabama have publicly available policies against workplace bullying, it is evident this research has the potential to aid the leaders of this mixed workforce community in mitigating current, and future, workplace bullying issues by creating a plan for implementing change within these business organizations.

Many of these local employers are contracting divisions of U.S. national defense agencies and their successes are paramount to our national security. It is within our nation’s best interest for each of these contracting agencies to maintain the best and brightest employees and to ensure their performance and success remain at the greatest capacity. This would require a successful implementation of anti-bullying policies and regulations emanating from the highest leadership level
within each contracting organization, along with continuous dissemination throughout the ranks.

**Statement of the Problem**

Workplace bullying is estimated to cost over $64 billion in job losses annually, as over 2 million workers in the U.S leave their positions each year due to rampant workplace mistreatment (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). Estimates for a corporation to deal legally with a single case of workplace bullying range from $30,000 to $100,000 annually (Aleassa & Megdadi, 2014). Other fiscal costs to the organization emanating from workplace bullying range from workers’ compensation claims, health-related claims, increased turnover, reduced motivation thus reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and internal staffing conflicts (Baillien et al., 2016; Blackstock, Harlos, Macleod, & Hardy, 2015; DeVos & Kirsten, 2015; McDonald et al., 2015).

Negative effects on individual targets include increased illness, psychological trauma, job loss, decreased productivity, mental illness, depression and anxiety, PTSD, increased heart disease incidence, and even suicide (Jenkins et al., 2011; Longton, 2014). Individuals also face emotional and psychological effects, such as mental stress, fatigue, lack of vigor, emotional turmoil, anger, incivility toward others, and can often turn to violence to deal with frustration and anger from workplace bullying (Sansone & Sansone, 2015; McDonald et al., 2015). Research states that over one quarter of the workforce in the U.S. has been directly
or indirectly involved in a workplace bullying incident within the past. (Namie, 2014)

However, the gap in information within workplace bullying statistics exists regarding the highly-regulated relationship between federal governmental employees and those of contracted employees and the effect on the workplace bullying phenomenon (Jacobs, 2013). The extra layer of regulations, as defined by the U.S. Army Human Resources Field Guide (Army, 2015) dictating proper and improper interactions between the federal workforce and contracted staff, may allow an even greater propensity for workplace bullying incidents to occur. More research is needed in this area.

As human capital is our most precious resource, we should empower leadership of organizations, governing such a unique mixed workforce of both federal workers employed alongside contracted staff, with the tools necessary to stave off such workplace bullying issues before they arise. Acknowledging workplace bullying exists and putting effective, proven, plans in place to actively deal with the issue is a fiscally responsible act for a business leader to enhance the value of the firm for the stakeholder, as the savings to the organization’s bottom line may be immeasurable (Gilbert, Raffo, & Sutarso, 2013).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a
specific region of north Alabama, with emphasis given to organizations whose workforce is mixed and consists of federal government employees as well as contracted staffers. At the theoretical level, this study intended to consolidate knowledge from academic research experts in the field of workplace bullying and outline concrete steps and implementable plans for area corporate leadership to implement within the various levels of management in the government contracting environment in the specific geographic region of Alabama studied.

At the practical level, this study intended to bring attention to the issue of workplace bullying within the same service area and highlight the need for positive change in the local workforce culture starting with the education of local leadership on the issue of workplace bullying. The hope was to use the collected data to aid local leadership in dealing effectively with and potentially eradicating the issue of workplace bullying in federal government contracting facilities where it existed, and potentially prevent the issue from gaining momentum in the future.

At the personal level, the study allowed this researcher to become knowledgeable in the field of workplace bullying and use the information gained to create a more positive workplace experience for persons employed in the northern Alabama region. This researcher desired to educate leaders within the community regarding the importance of recognizing and dealing effectively with workplace bullying to enhance the lives of our workforce and community as a whole.
**Nature of the Study**

This research study was a qualitative action research study, defined as a study oriented “to some action or cycle of actions that organizational or community members have taken, are taking, or wish to take to address a particular problematic situation” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 4). The research methodology aligned with The American Psychological Association’s 6th edition guidelines.

**Definition of Terms**

This section clarifies terms that are used throughout this study, with some included for the reader’s reference and information. The terms clarified include acronyms, those that have special meaning, and other common terms that have a particular meaning in the context of this study.

**Abusive Conduct.** An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders, Pattison, & Bible, 2012).

**Antisocial Employee Behavior.** An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders et al., 2012).

**Beneficence.** “Persons are treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, but also by making efforts to secure their well-being” (Health, 1979).

**Bully.** A person who puts his/her own need to control another human being above the needs of the organization he/she works for (Namie & Namie, 2009).
**Bullying at Work (or Workplace Bullying).** “Repeated, health-harming mistreatment of a person by one or more workers that takes the form of verbal abuse; conduct or behaviors that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; sabotage that prevents work from getting done; or some combination of the three” (Namie & Namie, 2009, p. 3).

**Change Management.** Referenced here as the “eight steps to transforming your organization by John Kotter (1995): 1) Establishing a sense of urgency; 2) Forming a powerful guiding coalition; 3) Creating a vision; 4) Communicating the vision; 5) Empowering others to act on the vision; 6) Planning for and creating short-term wins; 7) Consolidating improvements and producing still more change; 8) Institutionalizing new approaches” (p. 2).

**Competing Commitment.** A subconscious hidden goal by an employee conflicting with his/her stated goals to the company (Kegan & Lahey, 2001).

**Control.** Typically seen as a perpetrator withholding resources necessary for success along with deliberate humiliation aimed toward a single target in a workplace setting (Namie & Namie, 2009).

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).** “A strategic managerial tool to enhance a corporation’s competitive advantage within the marketplace and create a positive outcome on society” (Popa & Salanta, 2014).

**Cyberbullying.** “Actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual...
or group, that is intended to harm another or others” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013, p. 362).

**Destructive Communication.** “Intentional or unintentional communication that attacks receivers’ self-esteem or reputation or reflects indifference towards others’ basic values, and is harmful to organizational members, groups within organizations, or organizations as a whole” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013, p. 363).

**Employee Morale.** “The relationship that a particular employee or a group of employees have with their work and the organization they work for” (Arunchand & Ramanathan, 2013).

**Escalated Incivility.** An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders et al., 2012).

**Goodwill.** “An asset representing the future economic benefits arising from other assets acquired in a business combination that are not individually identified and separately recognized” (Ratiu & Tudor, 2013, p. 785).

**Hostile Work Environment.** “When an employee experiences workplace harassment and fears going to work because of the offensive, intimidating, or oppressive atmosphere generated by the harassed based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or, in some jurisdictions, sexual orientation, political affiliation, citizenship status, marital status, or personal appearance” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013, p. 365).
Incivility. “Rude, offensive and demeaning behaviors that vary in intensity and intention to harm others; behaviors that demean, demoralize, and degrade others; can be a subtle or overt attempts to disarm, distance, disrespect or silence another in ways that privilege one’s own views, positions, and possibilities” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013, p. 366).

Interpersonal Mistreatment. An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders et al., 2012).

Mixed Work Force. For the purposes of clarification in this research study, this term defines a federal workforce employed alongside a contracted workforce.

Mobbing. A psychiatrist and German born physician, Heinz Leymann, coined this term in the 1980’s while working in Sweden. It is another name for workplace bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013).

OPM. The United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is an independent agency of the United States government which manages the civil service of the federal government. The OPM is also responsible for a large part of the management of security clearances issued by the United States Government (OPM.GOV, 2016).

Perpetrator. Those who perform bullying acts against others (Namie & Namie, 2009, p. 3).
**Presenteeism.** “Slack productivity from ailing workers; workers in hostile environments may be at work, but they are not producing at their peak potential” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013, p. 368).

**Psychological Aggression.** An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders et al., 2012).

**Psychological Violence.** An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders et al., 2012).

**Psychosocial Harassment.** An alternate term used to identify bullying behavior (Sanders et al., 2012).

**Subject Matter Expert (SME).** “A person with bona fide expert knowledge about what it takes to do a particular job” (OPM.GOV, 2016).

**Target.** Individuals on the receiving end of bullying acts (Namie & Namie, 2009, p. 3).

**Tempered Radical.** “An informal leader who quietly challenges prevailing wisdom and provokes cultural transformation” (Meyerson, 2001, p. 61).

**Workplace Aggression.** “Efforts by individuals to harm others with whom they work or the organizations in which they are employed” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013, p. 371).

**Workplace Bullying.** “The repeated, health-harming mistreatment of an employee by one or more employees through acts of commission or omission manifested as: verbal abuse; behaviors—physical or nonverbal—that are
threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; work sabotage, interference with production; exploitation of a vulnerability—physical, social, or psychological; or some combination of one or more categories. The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI)” (Namie & Namie, 2011, p. 13).

**Workplace Bullying Institute.** “WBI is the first and only U.S. organization dedicated to the eradication of workplace bullying that combines help for individuals, research, books, public education, training for professionals-unions-employers, legislative advocacy, and consulting solutions for organizations.” Founded in 1997 (Namie, About Us, 2016).

**Significance of the Study**

This practitioner’s action research study ascertained proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific geographic region of north Alabama. It was the researcher’s hope that results of this study will be used to benefit organizations with employees consisting of a mixed workforce containing both federal government employees and contracted employees working side-by-side, as this is a unique labor force existing within the northern region of the state (Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County, 2016). It is this researcher’s intent to produce an anti-bullying policy model based on Kotter’s (1995) Eight-steps to transforming an organizational change theory. A model for anti-bullying policies and implementation practices created under proven, effective methods such as Kotter’s
allows change to have a positive lasting effect on an organization (Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2011). Out of the resulting guidelines achieved from the SMEs’ practitioner interview results, corporate leaders within the north Alabama region will be able to implement proven anti-bullying policies and practices for the mixed workforce of contractors and federal employees, thus enabling a healthier workplace for the region.

This research fills in the existing gap found from initial research regarding the lack of public anti-bullying policies and subsequent implementation of such, within the local workplace. This research aims to ensure workplace bullying is adequately addressed, to enhance the quality of the work environment for our defense workers and contracted workforce, among others, in the north Alabama workforce region. A subsequent positive change in the work environment can build morale, increase productivity, improve workers’ health, and increase the fiscal standing in our federally contracted workforce if such an anti-workplace bullying policy could be implemented on a broad scale within our region (Marshall, 2000; Takaki & Taniguchi & Hirokawa, 2013).

The model created from the research has applications for leaders at all levels in both national and global business organizations. Many of the corporations represented in the northern Alabama region have a global presence and may actually be able to adopt this model organization-wide on a global scale, thereby possibly engendering a globally based anti-bullying movement from the study.
Assumptions and Limitations

The assumptions in this study were as follows:

1. The experts interviewed gave the researcher approaches and strategies that will apply in the northern Alabama workplace community.

2. Information collected allowed for the development of a framework to address the problem.

3. The experts interviewed gave their unbiased opinions regarding workplace bullying to further the research collected and implemented to stop bullying in the workplace.

4. All experts interviewed were knowledgeable and true SMEs in the field of workplace bullying due to their extensive credentials.

5. The experts interviewed were honest and made a reasonable effort to minimize bias where it existed.

6. The researcher evaluated all data outcomes per the stated validity techniques.

The limitations in this study are as follows:

1. This study was restricted to SMEs within the field of workplace bullying.

2. The anticipated small size of the sample limited generalizations from the data.

3. The time frame of the data gathering was limited to a 10-week period.
4. The study was limited to the research and conclusions drawn from the responses of the SMEs who were interviewed.

**Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study was limited to a practitioner action research study of a group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the field of workplace bullying to produce an anti-workplace bullying processes and procedures model for leadership of organizations located in the northern Alabama region. The use of SMEs allowed for the compilation of decades of proven methods within one body of research for those in leadership positions governing a mixed work force consisting of both contracted and federal employees.

This type of mixed workforce comes with unique federal regulations governing the workplace relationships, adding an extra layer of protocols for leadership to navigate on a daily basis. For example, the Army’s HR Solutions Field Guide for Government-Contractor Relationships (2014) states the contractor must: be given a separate place to work when possible, wear unique identifying badges denoting the contractor status, wear logoed clothing whenever possible, and not be allowed to be perceived as being too friendly or becoming friends with his/her co-workers in the federal government (Command, 2015). Considering the above governing rules for the contacted workforce, it would seem that the federal worker may have the propensity to overuse these regulations, even to the point of creating a hostile work environment for the contractor. These additional regulations
alone could be seen as sufficient to create an environment predisposed for workplace bullying and hostile workplace cultures to occur, thus making the use of SMEs that much more valuable in creating a model to counteract such additional restrictive workplace regulations. The model created from the SME responses was based on, but not limited to: change theory, organizational trust, teambuilding, and forgiveness (Kotter, 1995).

**Worldview and Design**

The worldview of this researcher was transformative in nature. Creswell (2014) states that transformative worldviews often contain “an action agenda for reform that may change lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (p. 9). Creswell also goes on to relate the transformative worldview addresses important social issues of the day such as inequality, empowerment, oppression, alienation, domination, and that a researcher often begins with one of these issues as the focal point of the study (pp. 9-10).

A qualitative design for interviewing was used within this research study to gain valuable insight and information from SMEs regarding best practices to be gleaned from interviews to facilitate the creation of an anti-bullying policy for the unique mixed workforce employed in the northern Alabama region. This qualitative study had an approximate 10-week period for completion and SMEs were interviewed with a questionnaire via the survey instrument “SurveyMonkey®”. The
questionnaire included only open-ended questions for participant SMEs who were trained experts in workplace bullying interventions and education. Participants entered responses, by way of the written word, to each open-ended question, using his/her own years of experience with the topic. Follow-up question and answer sessions were conducted by telephone, and recorded with permission from the participant, to be transcribed and hand-coded, before the researcher entered the data into the coding software NVivo© for a secondary check of validity.

Four central research questions guided the framework of this study; they are:

1. What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?
2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?
3. What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?
4. What steps should corporate leaders in the northern Alabama workforce region take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?

Two sub-questions developed to guide the framework and understand the importance of mitigating workplace bullying within the workforce in the northern Alabama area even further are:
1. What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying in the north Alabama workplace?

2. How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?

It was the researcher’s goal for the stated worldview and design, along with the use of credentialed SMEs within the field of workplace bullying, to facilitate the creation of an anti-workplace bullying policy and procedures model for use in corporations and organizations by leaders in north Alabama. It was also the researcher’s goal that results of this study is used to benefit organizations with employees consisting of a mixed workforce containing both federal government employees and contracted employees working side-by-side, as this is a unique labor force existing within the northern region of the state.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter one covered the overview of the topic of workplace bullying and clearly delineated the rationale of the study and statement of the problem. The purpose and nature of the study were also discussed and terms related to this study were also defined. Chapter one also detailed the significance, assumptions, limitations and scope of this research study. Lastly, this chapter addressed the worldview and design chosen by this researcher for this study.

**Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

There are 5 chapters which comprise this study. Chapter 2 consists of the review of the literature and Chapter 3 describes the qualitative methodology used in
this practitioner’s action research study. Data analysis is presented in Chapter 4, and the study results and discussion are presented in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The movement toward anti-bullying in the workplace began in the 1980’s by Heinz Leymann, a German scientist working diligently in Sweden on the prevalent issue (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2015). In Sweden, as in many European countries, the issue is termed mobbing and Leymann’s research garnered enough support enabling Sweden in 1994 to become the first country to pass a law against mobbing at work (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2015). This relatively newly identified phenomenon was initially coined workplace bullying by Andrea Adams in England in 1988 and is presently the phrase most commonly used in the United States (Namie, 2016). When conducting research on this relatively new subject area, this researcher discovered the issue is found under varying labels, including psychological aggression, abusive conduct, antisocial employee behavior, escalated incivility, interpersonal mistreatment, psychosocial harassment, and psychological violence, among many others (Sanders et al., 2012).

Nearly two decades of research have now been conducted regarding workplace bullying in the United States and a vast majority of the work has been done by two professors, a husband and wife team, Doctors Gary and Ruth Namie. They founded the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) in 1997 (Namie, 2016), and the WBI has served as a global hub for research and academic partnership
regarding this rampant workforce issue. WBI is a global research organization in the realm of workplace bullying research, intervention, and education.

The WBI was developed by Doctors Namie after Ruth Namie personally experienced workplace bullying by a female supervisor and found there was no U.S. entity to aid targets suffering from such abusive practices (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2015). The initial efforts by Doctors Namie was the “Campaign Against Bullying in Benicia, California” (para. 3). After many years of recording thousands of instances of workplace bullying, and counseling targets, the effort was relocated to Bellingham, Washington and the “Campaign became the Workplace Bullying Institute” (para. 3-4), the unequalled research institution regarding this issue.

At present no universally agreed upon definition of workplace bullying exists (Gumbus & Lyons, 2011; Pastorek, Contacos-Sawyer, & Thomas, 2015; Pilch & Turska, 2015; Rai & Agarwal, 2016; Saunders, Huynh, & Goodman-Delahunty, 2007; Yuen, 2005). Jenkins et al., (2011) and Constantinescu (2011) elaborate on the issue in their rendering of the definition to include negative acts repeated over time when a difference of power exists between the target and the perpetrator. Longton (2014) stated the definition as unreasonable and repeated acts of an individual or group focused on an employee or group intended to degrade, undermine, humiliate, or create a risk to the safety and health of the employee. Trepanier, Fernet, and Austin (2015) also agreed with the above assessment of
behavior that creates a hostile and harmful work environment when they state employee bullying encompasses a situation where a staff member is repeatedly subjected to negative, persistent and systematic behaviors at the workplace creating distress, offense, and humiliation (p. 105). Trepanier et al., elaborated stating persistence and frequency of the abuse are key determinants of workplace bullying and can be work-related, person-related, or comprised of intimidation on the physical level (p. 105).

Escartin, Salin, and Rodriguez-Carballeira (2011) defined bullying in the workplace as negatively affecting someone’s work through socially excluding someone, offending or harassing them (p. 157). Escartin et al., elaborated by stating most often, workplace bullying follows some type of pattern and over time, the target may end up in a subordinate role within the organization (p. 157).

Worth and Squelch (2015) have stated in their research that the International Labour Organization defines workplace bullying as:

Repeated offensive behaviour [sic] through vindictive, cruel, malicious or humiliating attempts to undermine an individual or group of employees. Bullying is frequently covert and occurs out of sight of potential witnesses. However, the behaviours [sic] usually escalate in intensity over time. These persistently negative attacks on the personal and professional performance of victims are typically unpredictable, irrational and unfair. (p. 1016)
The researchers go on to state that workplace bullying has been defined elsewhere in the literature as:

- repeated, health-harming mistreatment of a person by one or more workers that takes the form of verbal abuse; conduct or behaviors that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; sabotage that prevents work from getting done; or some combination of the three

- the repeated unethical and unfavorable treatment of one person by another in the workplace. (Worth & Squelch, 2015, p. 1016)

Currently, the premiere workplace bullying researchers in America are Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie. They have developed a definition, after decades of research, which states: “the repeated, malicious, health-endangered mistreatment of one employee…by one or more employees” (McDonald et al., 2015). Drs. Namie stated the definition in another way: “workplace bullying is a non-physical form of workplace violence” (Namie, 2014). For this paper, the author used the Namies’ definition of workplace bullying.

Statistics

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, recent surveys have indicated that 27% of the population in the United States has been impacted from conduct considered abusive in the workplace (Namie, 2013). Gary Namie (2013) goes on to state in his research an additional 21% of workers have been a witness to workplace bullying, denoting 72% of the workplace population has an awareness of
workplace bullying occurring in their place of work (p. 3). Namie & Namie (2009) defined workplace bullying in their research as:

Repeated health-harming mistreatment of a person by one or more workers that takes the form of verbal abuse; conduct or behaviors that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; sabotage that prevents work from getting done; or some combination of the three. (p. 3)

Namie’s (2014) research outlines that 65.6 million workers have been affected by direct bullying or witnessing bullying in the U.S. (p. 5). A graphical representation of affected workers is shown in Figure 1 by totaling the populations of fifteen states.

Figure 1: U.S. Workforce Affected

Questions that Guided the Research

Four central research questions guided the framework of this study; they are:

1. What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?
2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?
3. What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?
4. What steps should corporate leaders in the northern Alabama workforce region take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?

Two sub-questions developed to guide the framework and understand the importance of mitigating workplace bullying within the workforce in the northern Alabama area even further, are:

1. What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying in the north Alabama workplace?
2. How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?

Method for Reviewing the Literature

This qualitative action practitioner’s research study focused on research published within the last five years, and the searches were performed almost
exclusively with parameters based on peer reviewed, scholarly publications. The
literature review analyzed current scholarly work in the areas of change
management theory, workplace engagement, organizational behavior, leading
change, business process management, restorative justice and forgiveness.

Research trends and peer-reviewed findings were explored and analyzed
from research experts in business management, organizational behavior, and
organizational development research disciplines. Use of such experts within their
related fields allowed for greater comprehension of core concepts and a key
understanding of terms and application of relevant topics to the genre, and created a
sustainable plan of operations. Peer reviewed journal searches of key terminology
within relevant databases allowed for the gathering of scholarly data from sites
such as: Academic Search Premier (EBSCOhost), ProQuest, Summon J.H. Evans
Library of Florida’s Institute of Technology, ERIC, Google Scholar, LexisNexis
Academic, SciQuest Academic, and Business Source Complete, among others.

In finality, 157 references have been cited to create this document. Of that
number, 115 references were peer reviewed journals, 22 were contemporary books
and most were written by academic researchers connected to WBI regarding
workplace bullying. To date, 69% of the references cited are younger than five
years (108 of the 157) which is well above the required University standard of
50%. Table 1 below further defines the statistics regarding the references used for
this body of research. This researcher also anticipated the dissertation publication date would be 2017 and set the five-year standard to begin in 2013 accordingly.

Table 1. Statistics Regarding References for this Study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Item</th>
<th>Subject Matter Books</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Peer Reviewed Journals</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Web &amp; Miscellaneous</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total # of References</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 5 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Total Number of References:</td>
<td>157</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terms used for peer reviewed journal searches included: workplace bullying, mobbing, change theory, workplace satisfaction, change management, action research, qualitative research process, leadership, organizational behavior, leading change, happiness in the workplace, motivation in the workplace, transformational leadership, restorative justice, and functional team leadership, among others.

**Method for Analyzing the Literature**

Information in this research was grouped according to relevant themes regarding workplace bullying and explained practical applications of anti-bullying policies and procedures within the workplace environment. Though the prevalence of bullying within the workplace is a relatively uncontested fact in the U.S., the “…development, implementation, and evaluation of actual organizational interventions…” have yet to be strategically applied and broadly studied as
effectively mitigating the phenomenon (Keashly & Neuman, 2009, p. 339). This study filled the gap in literature by compiling the research of SMEs’ best practices from the field and combining their responses into a single model enabling future application within the workplace to mitigate workplace bullying acts in the northern Alabama region where the workforce is mixed with both contracted and federal employees.

**Theoretical Framework--Change Leadership**

**Change Leadership**

Leading an organization through a time of change is a daunting endeavor, and “considering about 70% of all change initiatives fail” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 137), can challenge even the most ardent of leadership talent. One of the true rewards of leadership is developing the meaning within one’s own life while fostering the success of others to make positive changes (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Change leadership requires asking others to confront issues they have been facing. Often asking them to give up comfortable habits, moving to something new, uncomfortable and unproven (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Fragouli & Ibidapo, 2015). Quite often, employees who are the most valued assets to the leader become the most resistant to change within the organization due to a competing commitment. A subconscious or hidden goal or agenda in direct conflict with the stated goal or commitment is one a skilled leader must learn to identify
and overcome before a true change agenda can take hold within an organization (Kegan & Lahey, 2001).

**Adapting to Change.** An exceptional leader must also be able to manage themselves within a potential hostile environment as a change leader. Often those in leadership positions during the change initiative are seen as the enemy and their very careers become at risk due to their willingness to help the company succeed (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). According to the research of Heifetz and Linsky, change leaders must manage their environment and take the following six steps to succeed within a hostile change leadership environment:

1. **Operate in and above the fray.** Keep a close eye on what is happening to your initiative as it is happening in real time.
2. **Court the uncommitted.** Find those who are uncommitted but wary and get them to commit to your initiative as they can become the pillars to your success.
3. **Cook the conflict.** Keep the heat just high enough to motivate staff and low enough to prevent burnout and not encourage turmoil. Make sure the pace is slow and simmer in humor, with a brighter future as the main image for employees.
4. **Place the work where it belongs.** Others should mobilize to solve problems, as they need to be participants in the change.
5. Manage Yourself. Make sure others are seen as change agents and the employees are given a voice. Leader’s self-importance will kill the change movement.

6. Anchor Yourself. Find a safe place outside work as a sounding board for your decision-making process along with a confidant who is also not from within the organization to support you through the change initiative. Keep the organization as the key focus, not you the leader. Remember attacks are not personal, remain calm and stay engaged with people. (pp. 102-103)

**Proven Themes.** Meyerson (2001) points out that the principle of the tempered radical leader, or change leader, can also be effective in the role through tempered measures when applied in just the right way through quietly challenging prevailing wisdom and promoting transformation of the organization while trusting patience (p. 61). Meyerson (2001) defined the tempered radical leader as “an informal leader who quietly challenges prevailing wisdom and provokes cultural transformation” (p. 61). Meyerson continues stating the tempered radical can work independently, yet act as a uniting force, starting conversations, and forwarding their own agendas through the work of others and by seeking powerful friendships and alliances (p. 61).

As change efforts fail at an alarming rate, those efforts leave a startling wave of cost in their path, in both human terms as well as economic (Beer & Nohria, 2000). Most change theory can be divided up into those two basic
categories: Theory E (economic), Theory O (organizational or human), and it is the healthy balance of the two competing theories that leads to successful implementation of change leadership within an organization (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

All of the following highly suggested and proven change theories by researchers have imbedded within their suggested practices (a) long-term commitment on the part of leadership and the organization, and (b) the necessity of buy-in on behalf of the staff and employees of the organization, prior to and during the many phases of organizational change (Kotter, 1995; Gavin & Roberto, 2005; Hemp & Stewart, 2004; Sirkin, Keenan, & Jackson, 2014).

**Transformation.** Arguably one of the most renowned researchers on change management is John Kotter (1995), illustrated by his well-established *eight steps to transforming your organization*. Kotter presents his plan asserting managers and leaders more often than not believe change is an event and do not realize it is a process and happens slowly over time (p. 3). Kotter is adamant short cuts never work and for lasting change in an organization to occur, a leader must understand they are embarking on a long-term commitment and must have the buy-in from the employees within the organization, as stated within his *eight steps of transformation* as listed below:

1. Establish a sense of urgency. *Examining market and competitive realities.*

   *Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities.*
2. Forming a powerful guiding coalition. Assembling a group with enough power to lead the change effort. Encourage the group to work together as a team.

3. Creating a vision. Creating a vision to help direct the change effort. Developing strategies for achieving that vision.

4. Communicating the vision. Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies. Teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition.

5. Empowering others to act on the vision. Getting rid of obstacles to change. Changing systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision. Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions.


7. Consolidating improvements and producing still more change. Using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don’t fit the vision. Hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision. Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents.
8. Institutionalizing new approaches. *Articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success. Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession.* (p. 2)

When managers understand the stages of change and the importance of implementing each stage in its entirety, they can improve their chances of successful organizational change and head off errors in change management made daily by so many of our leaders; fewer errors can make the difference between success and failure (Kotter, 1995).

**Persuading Change.** Another technique heralded by researchers in the field of change management is change through persuasion. Gavin and Roberto (2005) use a four-stage persuasion campaign, as follows, to manage change:

1. Prepare the organization’s culture;
2. Present the plan, explaining in detail the purpose and expected impact;
3. Post plan implementation, manage employee emotions by acknowledging the pain of change while maintaining focus on the work ahead;
4. As results come in, reinforce desired behavioral changes to prevent backsliding. (p. 19)

When a leader invests the time necessary for employees to genuinely gain buy-in to the change process and be given a voice to acknowledge their fears, this can have a powerful positive influence on the change initiative (Gavin & Roberto, 2005). Persuasion change management can provide a leader great advantage in
creating the receptive environment necessary for lasting change in the workplace environment (Gavin & Roberto, 2005).

**Value of Change.** Values based management is also a tool used by leaders within the change management arena with successful results (Hemp & Stewart, 2004). This may be the ultimate managerial style, incorporating the employees’ input within the organization during the transformation as they are the essential tool in the redesign of the actual change (Hemp & Stewart, 2004). Values-based management energizes employees using hope and aspiration, instead of using fear and failure or punishment, as motivating factors in the workplace (Astrauskaite & Kern & Notelaers, 2014; Hemp & Stewart, 2004; Winter & Jackson, 2014). In creating a values-based change management system, five steps are paramount:

1. Gather employees’ input on values. *Assess the strategic challenges facing the company. Propose values you believe will help the firm meet the challenges and collect employees’ feedback on the ideas.*


3. Revise your values. *Based on the themes in employees’ input, create a revised set of values and then gather employees’ input once again.*

4. Identify obstacles to living the values. *Examine employees’ responses to identify what is preventing your company from living its agreed-upon values.*
5. Launch change initiatives to remove obstacles. *Initiate change programs that enable people to live the values.* (Hemp & Stewart, 2004, pp. 38-39)

Values-based management allows most people within the company to get excited about the upcoming changes and have their voices heard in the change process, as their values have become a portion of the new change initiative (Hemp & Stewart, 2004). This inclusive method can be a portion added to any management portfolio.

Leaders of organizations in this flattening global world are struggling to cope with the ever-increasing accelerated pace of change and the challenges affecting businesses today (Friedman, 2005). In this fast-paced change environment, organizations must have pioneers who are willing to take up the challenge and embrace change, specifically seeking to protect those who value the human spirit in the workplace. Researchers Dussault and Frenette (2015) state “…transformational leadership is likely to provide an environment that makes bullying more rare than under a negative or passive leadership” (p.1).

**Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture can be an exceptionally powerful force if not the most influential force found within the change arena in business (Wildenberg, 2006). Culture contains both the power to hold an organization together during the time of change within the organization, or be the factor that allows the organization to fail and not adapt to the new needs of the organization (Ali & Ivanov, 2015;
One of the most common approaches leadership can take toward a positive commitment to change when endeavoring in this effort is adopting an effective proven compliance program through the active adoption and implementation of a code of conduct or code of ethics (Robson, 2015). Consideration should be given by leadership to identify all stakeholders’ desires within the potential codes’ effectiveness and then seek to identify the procedures, processes, and abilities needed for successful implementation to gain desired results (Jacobs, Rouse, & Parsons, 2014; Robson, 2015; Wildenberg, 2006).

**Corporate Social Responsibility**

Employee morale is defined as “the relationship that a particular employee or a group of employees have with their work and the organization they work for” (Arunchand & Ramanathan, 2013, p. 1). When this employee-employer relationship is not a healthy one, this leads to low employee morale resulting in pessimism and low productivity for the corporation (Arunchand & Ramanathan, 2013). One tool corporations developed to combat this trending downward morale spiral was the strategic managerial tool of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Popa & Salanta, 2014). CSR was established as a complex managerial tool to enhance a corporation’s competitive advantage within the marketplace and create a positive outcome on society (Popa & Salanta, 2014). CSR also encompasses the code of ethics or code of conduct corporations have used in written form to apprise constituents of their intent to “do good” within their business practices.
However, this written CSR document will not stand alone as the final verdict when the time comes for a judgment in a trial by either public opinion or court of law. Regulations on their own do not equate to obedience, but a proven compliance program often shows concrete action has been taken by management to ensure the guidelines set into place were actionable and not just for show (Chu, 2014; Meiners, Ringleb, & Edwards, 2012). Meiners et al. (2012) relate the U.S. Department of Justice will consider an effective compliance program of a corporation as a key determinate on whether or not to prosecute or even to recommend leniency to a court when such issues may arise for a corporation in the federal prosecution arena (p. 18).

Anti-workplace bullying components of CSR should establish the ethical practices and be proactive to eliminate workplace bullying. Corporations should “establish written anti-bullying policies, develop codes of conduct, and enforce a zero-tolerance policy… [ensuring] effective leadership, values, and ethics training [as well]” (Bame, 2013, pp. 125-126). Trudel’s (2009) research concurs in his findings, stating “by establishing policies and codes of conduct aimed at specifically encouraging respect and discouraging incivility…the organizational environment may perpetuate or inhibit incivility” (Trudel, 2009, p. 176).

Fiscal Motives

Not only does the corporation of today focus on the bottom line for the shareholder, the leadership of corporate giants must also concentrate on the
goodwill associated with their corporation in the marketplace (Graafland & Schouten, 2012). Goodwill being defined as the “intangible asset arising as a result of name, reputation, customer loyalty, location, products, and similar factors not separately identified” and adding value to an organization (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 2016, p. 1).

Graafland and Schouten (2012) inform the reader that CSR can have financial motives for the corporate leader and may contribute to long term financial performance of the company, improve the reputation within the consumer market, create a workforce that is happy to remain with them, and generate a positive attitude and good conduct among staff as well (p. 379). The ethical connection to CSR implementation can be seen through both the altruistic and moral obligations a leader may feel as they embrace the process (p. 381). Executives often take their own personal values and use them to generate their preferences within CSR implementation policies and corporate procedures (Graafland & Schouten, 2012). Profits increase when there is less turnover, more trust within the workforce, lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and a more positive work attitude (p. 379).

Organization of Studies According to Themes

Profiles Regarding Bullying

A recent Gallup survey concluded workplace anger is a problem on the rise in the U.S., affecting morale as well as productivity, and is an important ingredient of violence in the workplace (Fenton, Kelley, Bulloch, & Ruud, 1997).
Many of the traits considered to be those of a good leader are also found exhibited daily by workplace bullies (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). “Personal characteristics can help determine potential harassment perpetrators” confirms Bowling and Beehr (2006) in their research (p. 1000). The traits allowing managers to be effective at work, such as being hard-nosed, and having a no-nonsense style of leading, along with being considered a risk-taker and charismatic, are all related and very closely intertwined with sociopathic behavior (p. 22). This leads Olive and Cangemi (2015) to state “there is no foolproof way to identify such a person, even with knowing him or her for years” (p. 22).

Often the bully continually gets away with such behavior because the acts are very subtle in nature and occur over a long period with many individual targets (p. 22). When the acts are considered individually, they often do not receive the attention or correcting they deserve; however, when they are taken as a whole, the pattern becomes evident that humiliation and systematic degradation are occurring (p. 22). Escartin et al. (2011) state: “bullying often follows an escalating pattern and the person confronted over time ends up in an inferior position…feeling inferior to defend oneself successfully is (also) an important characteristic of the bullying experience” (p. 162).

Michael Weber (2014) postulates bullies are reinforced for their behavior because they are allowed to continually get their own way. When they are not held accountable or confronted, their behavior advantage outweighs any known
disadvantages because they do not exist (p. 34). According to Sanders et al. (2012), the U.S. has become a breeding ground for workplace bullying in economic pressures, considering the ever-growing service industry represents over 70% of the economy (p. 3). With the increases in face-to-face service interactions, this industry is highly susceptible to the clashes of individual personalities, allowing a larger predilection for bullying to exist. Managers have a global level of pressure to perform and provide better quality at lower cost on a consistent level which can literally fuel existing bullies into action and trigger new ones (p. 3).

Appelbaum, Semerjian and Mohan (2012) state bullying in the workplace will only take place if the perpetrator believes he has the support and the blessing, or a perception of such, to behave in the offensive manner (p. 207). According to Workplace Bullying Institute’s 2014 Survey, a majority of bullies are bosses (p. 10). When viewing the perpetrators within the bullying incidents, the vast prevalence are committed by a person who is a single rank higher than the target at a rate of 40%; followed by the second most prevalent in the rank of peer at 19% (p. 10) as seen in Figure 2 below.
Gender and Race Relevance

**Gender.** Escartin et al. (2011) found in their research as they had hypothesized, women more than men mentioned emotional abuse more often. However, men noted abusive work conditions more often than female respondents (p. 161). They propose this may be because women face the possibility of discrimination much more than men and therefore may be much more sensitive to such threats in their career (p. 162).

Gilbert, Raffo, and Sutarso (2013) postulate in their literature review that females who actively defend themselves in workplace bullying incidents are often perceived as less collegial and virtually responsible for the incident in question (p. 2). Gilbert et al. also relate, “individuals who are impacted by inequity at work might react more strongly to bullying incidents” (p. 2). They also find when
conditions of high hostile sexism in the workplace exist; women are more often considered the responsible party of the bullying than their male counterparts (p. 3).

Considering bullying generally occurs from the top down and not the reverse, it is typical to see more men than women are reported as the perpetrator (Salin & Hoel, 2013). Studies show men are more often the victims or targets of supervisor and line-management while their colleagues more regularly bully women (p.237). Women more often reported their negative interactions as severe in nature, especially considering emotional abuse, discrediting of professionalism, and social isolation techniques of the bully (Salin & Hoel, 2013). Men tend to play the abuse down to a less significant level (p. 237). However, Salin and Hoel also found higher levels of exclusion had a much more significant effect on the psychological health of the male target than the female. Evidence shows this is related to the male perception of his self-esteem (p. 237). Salin and Hoel summarize in stating “women more often face social manipulation and men more often face work-related negative acts” (p. 239).

Issues such as incivility are argued to be low-intensity bullying and may very well be the modern take on discrimination in the workplace reflecting the existence of a bias against certain social groups or those with lower perceived social status (Hutchinson, 2013; Salin & Hoel, 2013). This type of covert bullying may exemplify both gender and racial partiality within the place of work (p. 240).
As seen in Figure 3 above, 69% of bullies are male while 57% of their targets are women. Women bullies also target women 68% of the time (Namie, 2014). From this data, it is clear the vast majority of perpetrators are in fact men, and both men and women prefer targeting women in the workplace (p. 7). An additional graphic representation of this information is seen clearly in Figure 4 below.
Race. When considering race and workplace bullying, it is important to note race may play a pivotal role in the bullying process. Bearing in mind the Workplace Bullying Institute (2014) defines bullying as abusive conduct, research shows this effectively compounds discriminatory conduct (Namie, 2014). Namie states bullying both supplements and exacerbates treatment of others in the place of work that may or may not have been based in the race or ethnical background of the intended target (p. 9). Bullying we do know transcends ethnic and racial boundaries.

The way in which non-white individuals respond to bullying versus their white counterparts is in the assignment of responsibility for the issue. White respondents blamed the perpetrating 47% of the time, while Hispanics blamed the perpetrator at a rate of 33% and African Americans and Asians blamed the
employer 32% and 46% respectively (Namie, Workplace Bullying Institute, 2014).

Figure 5 below details race and the bullying experience regarding witnessing the event versus direct experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Witness</th>
<th>Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfricanAmerican</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Consequences

**Effects on the Organization.** Reduced productivity and less output are often a direct result of workplace bullying (Olive & Cangemi, 2015; Samnani & Singh, 2016). These are generally followed by high turnover rates as individuals leave to pursue organizations where they are valued and feel protected (Olive & Cangemi, 2015, p. 21). Another cascading effect of allowing bullying to go unchecked in the organization is the firm’s reputation of a hostile work environment in the stakeholder market (p. 21). This can hinder the future of the organization, as recruiting of new and innovative talent will learn of the reputation of the firm and seek satisfaction elsewhere. Olive and Cangemi (2015) state professional workers are leaving their jobs at a rate of two million a year due to
their perception of being treated unfairly on the job, at a cost of $64 billion to the U.S. economy (p. 21).

Other potential organizational costs associated with workplace bullying are theft, sabotage, and legal action taken against the organization (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). Civil suits, unemployment insurance claims, as well as workers’ compensation claims, are all actions that take precious resources away from the organization due to the effects of unhindered bullying (p. 21). Sansone and Sansone (2015) agree increased absenteeism due to bullying in the workplace, along with unemployment for those who can no longer cope within the current perceived unsafe work environment, are just two of the negative consequences to the organization (p. 32).

McDonald et al. (2015) relate in their research the effects bullying may have on the fiscal health of the overall organization (p. 28). Researchers also espouse the business may encounter direct expenses while defending law suits, health-related complaints and workers’ compensation claims from affected employees (McDonald et al., 2015; Rostkowski & Singh, 2015). McDonald et al. (2015) and Stalcup (2013) also agree indirect financial expenses are plentiful in the form of increased turnover rates, worker motivation reduction, health problems, internal sabotage, and absenteeism due to conflicts within the workplace (p. 28). Aleassa and Megdadi (2014) state a single legal case of workplace bullying can cost a corporation anywhere from $30,000 to $100,000 annually (p. 158).
**Effects on the Individual.** A continuum exists of negative mental and physical effects on the target including an increased risk of heart disease, depression and anxiety to cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and even suicide (Jenkins et al., 2011). Sharon Longton (2014) states bullying acts have an impact on time lost at work due to physical injury or illness, behavioral changes, psychological trauma, and decreased productivity (p. 243). “The strong relationships between bullying and health-related variables show the importance of developing organizational remedies and measures against workplace bullying”, in that health issues of the individual may have harsh consequences on the organization overall (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

When bullying in the workplace occurs, Olive and Cangemi (2015) state an employee’s self-esteem is greatly diminished and the staffer often reverts to Maslow’s safety level or “fear” on the 1970’s Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (p. 21). Effectively, what happens is a target or victim of bullying is unable to focus on work and therefore productivity and creativity are stifled. Bullying acts are also very difficult to recount and “frame” as the experiences are not linked to a “specific type of language (i.e., sexual, racial)”, and workers often struggle recalling the abusive behavior when asked to document it due to its fluid nature (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2005, p. 37). Another effect that follows is an increase in employee turnover when individuals feel they are no longer able to contribute to the effectiveness of the organization (p. 21). Additionally, Parker (2014) and Sansone
and Sansone (2015) state some of the emotional and psychological effects are increased mental stress, fatigue in women, lack of vigor in men, anxiety, depression, and at worst, work-related suicide (p. 32). Bowling and Beehr concurred in their 2006 research study, stating, “Workplace harassment was clearly associated, negatively, with victims’ well-being” (p. 1006).

McDonald et al. (2015) and Neall and Tuckey (2014) agree that bullying fosters reactions in employees going beyond the emotional turmoil faced by the target. They claim the effect is to foster undesirable workplace situations and actions on behalf of the beleaguered staff. This may take the form of severe incivility, violence, anger, or even theft or sabotage as covert retaliatory actions due to the abuse.

One obvious outcome of workplace bullying is the prevalence of job loss. With morale at the work site being significantly low when bullying is present, job losses and turnover rates are of considerable import. When considering the factors of job loss due to workplace bullying incidents, the statistics may confound the reader. The target actually loses the position at an alarming rate when compared to the perpetrator (Shallcross, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013). Figure 6 below offers further clarification.

As depicted in Figure 6 below, targets lose their jobs at a much higher rate than perpetrators (82% vs. 18%). When bullies are men, regardless of the targets’ gender, the loss rate is equally high. However, when bullies are women, women
targets lose their jobs 89% of the time. Notably, when a woman is the perpetrator, and the woman is the target, women suffer the highest job loss rate of any gender pairing (Namie, Workplace Bullying Institute, 2014, p. 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Pairs</th>
<th>Target Loses Job</th>
<th>Perpetrator Loses Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Perpetrator: Male Target</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Perpetrator: Female Target</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Perpetrator: Male Target</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Perpetrator: Female Target</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Even the in-house workplace health and wellness programs, designed to aid those in need and certainly in distress, may not be a viable alternative for the organization allowing bullying to exist and consistently affect workers (McDonald et al., 2015). By inadequately addressing the underlying cause of the distress, in this case bullying, the organization may be funding internal health programs that will remain ineffective and simply become a financial drain on the institution without proper mitigation of the real issue (p. 28).

**Legal Environment**

It may be extremely hard to believe; however, there is no law in America that exists making workplace bullying an illegal act (Bailey, 2014; Gumbus & Meglich, 2012; Martin & LaVan, 2010; Richardson & Joiner & Hall, 2016).
Corporations in the U.S., in an ideal world, would immediately perceive the operational, morale, and economic benefits associated with eliminating workplace bullying; however, “new workplace policies are not usually initiated by employers voluntarily; rather, they are created most often in direct response to regulatory laws and legal requirements” (Caldwell, 2016, p. 3).

At the time of this research, the closest the United States has come to enacting proposed legislation, such as the Healthy Workplace Bill, are the new state laws in California and Tennessee passed in 2014 prohibiting abusive conduct at work (McDonald et al., 2015). McDonald et al., also state that in 2015, Connecticut, New York, North Dakota, and Utah had the Healthy Workplace Bill before their state legislatures, but to date, none have passed the bill into law. At present, victims must find themselves within a protected class under various existing laws in order to have even a remote chance of finding legal recourse for workplace bullying (p. 29).

Appelbaum et al. (2012) suggest according to American law, only a protected status group can legally prove harassment leaving virtually no legal basis for workplace bullying claims on their own merit (p. 337). Since claims against workplace bullying began, victims have filed legal suits against employers using existing tort and discrimination laws. Though very difficult to prove, they are relevant within the workplace bullying cases. They include laws such as: “intentional infliction of emotional distress (IIED), intentional interference with the...
employment relationship (IIER), disability discrimination and harassment laws, and the Occupational Safety and Health Law (OSHL)” (McDonald et al., p. 29)

Termed the Healthy Workplace Bill (HWB), Professor David Yamada wrote the model for proposed legislation all over the nation in 2004 (Sanders et al., 2012). The HWB exists to provide a single civil cause of action to the victims or targets of regular systemic bullying within the workplace (p. 12). The key to the deployment of the HWB is the existence of retaliation or an abusive work environment, each of these within the proposed bill would be employment practices that are unlawful and can be charged against the employer as well as the employee who commits the offenses (p. 12). The caveat inserted by Yamada about the proposed legislation is that, in order to declare an abusive work environment, the evidence and findings would require an act of omission as judged by the reasonable person standard. In addition, if the act did not result in adverse employment action, this may relieve the employer of any responsibility. This is designed to negate frivolous suits that would surely inundate the judicial system (p. 13). At the time of this research, “32 legislatures [30 states and 2 territories] have introduced the HWB” at the state government level; however, none have been ratified by the governing bodies and passed into law (Namie, Healthy Workplace Bill/State of the Union, 2017).

Foreign governments are light years ahead of the United States regarding legislation dealing effectively with this urgent issue. According to Sanders et al.
(2012), Sweden, France, Italy, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Spain, Australia, Canada, and Norway all have active legislation providing worker protection for the effects of workplace bullying (p. 3).

The only current legal recourse forces a target of workplace bullying within the U.S. to prove the actions caused “adverse employment action” and most importantly, the target must be in a protected class listed within Title VII Legislation for any legal action to even be considered (McDonald et al., 2015). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin and disability (Meiners et al., 2012).

Human Resource Management

When the human resources professional represents the company and is also supposed to represent the victim in a case of workplace bullying, the apparent paradox is evident (Daniel, 2009). As seen in Ulrich’s 1997 model of the four main roles of human resources, the professional must act as a strategic partner, an administrative expert, an employee champion, as well as a change agent (Fox & Cowan, 2015). The real conundrum exists when the human resource professional is left to be the employee champion while serving as the representative of the corporation within the same interaction (p. 119). Researchers Harrington, Rayner, and Warren (2012) agree with their finding:

By virtue of their role alignment and previous experiences of handling bullying, HR (Human Resource) practitioners were found to prioritise [sic]
their relationships with managers, automatically distrusting employees’ bullying claims. Despite also distrusting managers to effectively deliver HRM practices, it appears that bullying complaints are ‘too hot to handle’ for HR practitioners given the risks to their relationships with managers. (p. 392)

Often, the high performers of the corporation are the ones committing the acts of bullying and the strategic partner role wins out over the employee champion in virtually every encounter. This is simply a self-preservation means to an end for the human resource practitioner (p. 119).

Rooyen and McCormack (2013) found in their study that both employees as well as supervisory staff had very little appreciation, concrete skills, or specified training on effectively dealing with workplace bullying (p. 92). Serious deficiencies were disclosed in their study on treating obvious negative workplace behaviors, though findings have linked bullying to dozens of physical and emotional ailments within the individual employee, witnesses, and the corporation itself (p. 99).

In order to implement a successful anti-bullying program within an organization, Fox and Cowan (2015) and Ritzman (2016) agree that the human resource specialist needs to be involved from the initial planning through the implementation phases of the workplace bullying policy and procedure development. The corporation will also need to implement training for all human
resource personnel regarding what constitutes workplace bullying and aid in the design of the program to mitigate it (Galanaki & Papalexandris, 2013).

Bano and Malik (2013), Rousseau and Eddleston (2014) and Woodrow and Guest (2014), fill the reader in on the greater need of proper implementation of policies and procedures. Their research findings agree that while a policy may be in existence within an organization, when implementation is uneven or not reflective of best practices, lower performance on the job may also negatively affect the well-being of the individual and job satisfaction. An essential feature of implementing an anti-workplace bullying program is the management of the bullying policy of the corporation (Woodrow & Guest, 2014).

The human resource function of the business will most certainly be the one responsible for such management and the creation of the internal bullying policy. Included in instituting policies against verbal aggression “are reporting procedures and the formal and informal promulgation of the concept that violence and verbal aggression are unacceptable in the workplace…and supervisors [should be] modeling how interpersonal interactions should be conducted” (Spector, Coulter, Stockwell, & Matz, 2007). This explicit policy, created with the aid of the human resource team, will tie together all the disparate components of the policy, enabling the full workforce to understand the corporation’s stand and mandated actions toward this event (Veterinary Team Brief, 2014; Spector et al., 2007).
The first portion of this course of action is a clear statement of the organizational policy, including the extreme opposition to bullying, defining bullying to the stakeholder, along with easy to identify references to the remainder of internal policies that may be useful to the worker (Woodrow & Guest, 2014). One such policy example would be the whistle-blower policy and the disciplinary policy (p. 40-41). The second portion of this policy should be a very simple description of the route for informal complaints to be addressed by all staffers before they escalate into full formal issues. The third portion would be a very descriptive narrative defining exact steps to take when a formal complaint of bullying is filed (p. 40).

Staff training and introduction must also follow all corporate bullying policies as they are implemented (Woodrow & Guest, 2014). Managers must be provided with the skills necessary to uphold the written policy according to the corporation’s wishes. Woodrow and Guest also suggest the document outline all of the relevant human resource practices within the corporation for the management of workplace bullying, leaving nothing to the imagination (p. 41). Guidelines must clearly state a zero-tolerance policy and the training of those who implement policies and procedures should also reflect that importance (Wilson J. L., 2016).

The reasons are vast for implementing policies and procedures proactively to avoid bullying within the workplace. First, organizations may be able to avoid costly litigation with proper human resource implementation of effective policies
(Sanders et al., 2012, p. 31). Second, the HWB can be the standard bearer for the industry and an affirmative action for defense (p. 31). Third, adoption of such procedures within an organization can lead to much stronger organizational culture and positive behaviors within the workplace (p. 31).

Sanders et al. (2012) recommend the following actions be taken in human resource management to aid in the successful mitigation of workplace bullying: (a) implement a policy; (b) recognize bullying behaviors; (c) implement an effective screening tool; and (d) enforce a no-bullying rule (p. 33-34).

Aleassa and Megdadi (2014) state a “credible intervention strategy to curtail bullying behavior is a training program directed toward improving the quality of the social relationship” within the workplace (p. 163). Managers should focus their efforts on addressing bullying and psychological ownership at the same time. This will create a secure and supportive environment contributing to the employee’s hierarchy of needs, allowing protection from possible humiliation, and restoring the sense of power balance within the corporation (p. 163).

Appelbaum et al. (2012) suggest in their research findings that transformational leadership and ethical leadership are very effective forms for managers to implement and counteract workplace bullying (p. 337). Each organization can and should create its own set of norms and values by developing guidelines to enhance and enforce the ethical standard (p. 340). Appelbaum et al. elaborate stating the climate saturated in ethical practices and procedures, and
perceived as ethical by the workforce, seems to be the most effective effort toward avoidance of the formation of workplace bullying from the start (p. 337).

**Effective Mitigation**

To avoid workplace violence and forego potentially adverse litigation, an employer should implement and publish a policy outlawing weapons on company property (Fenton et al., 1997). Companies should develop and host employee and supervisor training, emphasizing prevention techniques and concrete ways to reduce workplace violence, as well as a documented reporting system and widely known and understood consequences for not abiding by the regulations (p. 47).

All levels of management control systems must be considered when implementing the anti-bullying policy within a corporation. Each leadership position within the corporate hierarchy should be involved from the implementation phase through the daily interactions, with accountability linked directly to the highest authority of the corporation regarding this policy (Barney, 2011). Leadership might also consider adding an anti-bullying line item to the annual divisional performance evaluation of key leadership for emphasis (Barney, 2011).

Recommendations of Escartin et al. (2011) are to implement the following three policies to help mitigate bullying in the workplace when considering gender bias. First, they recommend having both a male and female point of contact to choose from for potential victims in the workplace. Second, in the creation of all
grievance and review committees there should be an equal mix of men and women to help ensure the female experience is not trivialized. Third, Escartin et al. suggest having open and honest discussions and training with all managers that openly acknowledge the gendered nature of bullying in the workplace (p. 163).

Carden and Boyd (2013) suggest one key to successful mitigation of bullying is to start by gaining the commitment and support from the senior leadership team (p. 15). They elaborate by stating various levels of support for implementing a corporate monitoring and controlling plan that can be done by leadership on a continual basis, to include:

(a) Establish a bullying policy to monitor and control behaviors;
(b) Establish a system for easily and confidentially reporting and handling complaints;
(c) Implement processes to investigate and resolve bullying issues;
(d) Provide training for awareness, complaint handling, investigation and resolution of bullying;
(e) Reprimand the bullying individuals; and
(f) Monitor the work environment for potentially hazardous relationships.

(Tool, 2012)

Sanders et al. (2012) state, in great contrast to the severe damage done within an organization where no mitigation efforts exist for workplace bullying, those who do effectively manage this issue outperform the others by thirty to forty
percent (p. 30). According to Henderson (2013), “by engaging employee and organizational leaders, the organizational culture may adapt to eliminating bullying in the workplace” (p. 100). Researchers have also found leadership in corporations should “build a culture of support in which a target can seek help to voice concerns, …promoting] a high quality of life…” by developing internal policies and active compliance programs that foster the development of skills necessary within the workplace to counteract bullying, while expanding a “culture in which the norm is civility” (Peacock, 2015, p. 128).

**Synthesis**

Over thirty years of research conducted regarding workplace bullying within the U.S. and the statistics are staggering, as illustrated earlier within this study. However, academics and professionals have confirmed repeatedly through various research how devastating workplace bullying is to both the individuals and organizations involved; but as of this research time frame, there has yet to be a single act of legislation passed within the U.S. to protect workers against such heinous acts. Therefore, leaders within U.S. corporate settings should show due diligence keeping corporate social responsibility in the forefront by creating compliance programs within their organizations, enacting zero-tolerance policies and procedures through codes of conducts and ethics, and enforcing them within the organization from the highest leadership levels throughout the organization.
Chapter Summary

Chapter two covered the statistics regarding workplace bullying within the United States and introduced the questions that guided this research. Methods for reviewing and analyzing the literature on workplace bullying were presented and the theoretical framework of change leadership was introduced. Bullying effects on organizational culture and corporate social responsibility were discussed, along with consequences to both the organization and the individual employee when bullying acts occur within the workplace. Chapter three will cover in extensive detail the methodologies used within this research study along with a detailed description of the research participants.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Overview

This practitioner’s qualitative action research study sought to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific region of north Alabama. The emphasis was on organizations whose workforce was mixed and consisted of federal government employees as well as contracted staffers.

Organization of the Remainder of this Chapter

The first section of this chapter contains detailed descriptions of the ethical considerations, research questions and research design, research approach, and the quality management model used within this study. The second section contains information covering the population of participants, demographics of participants, and instrumentation and procedures. The third section covers data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity, and generalizability of the data regarding this study.

Ethical Considerations

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) application through Florida Institute of Technology was completed for this study and submitted and approved on September 28th, 2017. Per current IRB guidelines, this researcher followed all protocols informing research in the University’s document: “Principles, Policy, and Applicability for Research Involving Human Subjects”, along with any and all
rules and regulations developed by the University which governs research related to this study (Florida Institute of Technology's Institutional Review Board, 2016). The researcher created, implemented, and stored all informed consent forms and video/audio consent forms, in full compliance with all regulatory IRB guidelines of University policy and procedures.

This researcher also successfully completed the certification course, entitled “Protecting Human Research Participants”, on July 02, 2016, issued through The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research; The NIH Certification can be seen in Appendix A. According to The NIH Office of Extramural Research (NIH) the course objectives enable those who complete it to:

1. Describe the history and importance of human subjects’ protections;
2. Identify research activities that involve human subjects;
3. Discover the risks a research project might pose to participants;
4. Understand how to minimize the risks posed by a research project;
5. Describe additional protections needed for vulnerable populations;
6. Understand additional issues that should be considered for international research;
7. Describe appropriate procedures for recruiting research participants and obtaining informed consent;
8. Identify the different committees that monitor human subjects’ protections; and
9. Understand the importance of study design in the protection of research participants. (National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research, 2008, p. 2)

This research study was guided by two ethical considerations for all participants, as highlighted within The NIH training (National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research, 2008): 1) beneficence; and 2) risk management. Beneficence led this investigator, as the NIH states to “give forethought to the maximization of benefits and the reduction of risk that might occur for the research investigation” (p. 63).

Though “all research involves some levels of risk” (National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research, 2008, p. 63), this researcher further denoted the associated risks for participants who fall into the main categories as outlined by The National Institutes of Health: “a) physical; b) psychological; c) social; d) legal; and e) economic” (p. 64). This researcher also followed NIH suggested protocols listed below to mitigate and protect participants against any undue risk associated with research participation, though often research such as this is considered to be of minimal risk:

a. Physical: In many situations, physical risks in research can be minimized by carefully and skillfully following protocols, by having trained individuals conduct research procedures, through careful
monitoring of research participants’ health status, by recruiting appropriate populations, and by providing clinical care when needed.

b. Psychological: Possible ways to protect against psychological risks include reminding participants of their right to withdraw from research or limit their participation if they become uncomfortable, providing counseling or psychological support for participants who experience distress, or thoroughly debriefing research participants after research sessions are completed.

c. Social: Often, minimizing social risks to participants involves protecting confidential data, including not only the data collected, but also the fact of participation in the research project itself.

d. Legal: Protections against legal risks often involve protecting the confidentiality of research data. For studies in the United States, investigators can apply for Certificates of Confidentiality which are intended to prevent investigators from being forced to disclose data that can be linked to identifiable research participants in legal proceedings.

e. Economic: Protecting confidentiality is one method for protecting against economic risks, such as those to employability and insurability (pp. 65-66).

This practitioner action qualitative research study proposed a minimal level of risk to participants on the IRB application and anticipated no level of harm or
discomfort regarding the participants of the study. Minimal risk as defined by NIH in the Common Rule is “the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests” (National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research, 2008, p. 64).

All participants within this study were Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) regarding workplace bullying and are highly credentialed within their chosen fields; and most were holding the terminal degree of their chosen profession. No compensation was offered to, given, or received by any participants for their responses. Participants of the study were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choosing, and transcripts and recordings from those interviews were destroyed immediately after analysis and coding were completed.

**Research Questions**

Four central research questions guided the framework of this study; they are:

1. What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?
2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?
3. What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?

4. What steps should corporate leaders in the northern Alabama workforce region take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?

Two sub-questions developed to guide the framework, and understand the importance of mitigating workplace bullying within the workforce in the northern Alabama area even further, are:

1. What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying in the north Alabama workplace?

2. How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?

**Research Design**

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), a research approach should follow the research problem and “afford a research study methodological congruence” (p.27). Bloomberg and Volpe also assert qualitative research is highly suited to facilitate a greater understanding of a social setting or episode as seen through the eyes of the participants of the research. The rationale for selecting the action research method of approach was exceptionally personal in nature, as well as scientific. Creswell (2014) states researchers’ own “personal training and experiences also influence their choice of approach” and provide “…a strong stimulus to pursue topics that are of a personal interest--issues that relate to
marginalized people and an interest in creating a better society for them and
everyone.” (pp. 20-21)

When focusing on circumstances that are specific to situations or people
within the qualitative research method, five intellectual goals are helpful to keep in
mind and have guided this research study, as outlined by Maxwell (2013):

1. Understanding the meaning for participants in the study, of the events,
situations, experiences, and actions they are involved with or engage in.

   Meaning in this sense is referred to as the “participants’ perspective”.

2. Understanding the particular contexts within which the participants act,
   and the influence that this context has on their actions.

3. Understanding the process by which events and actions take place.

4. Identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating
   new…theories about the latter.

5. Developing causal explanations. (pp. 30-31)

Maxwell (2013) states in qualitative approaches any portion of the design
may need to be modified or reconfigured during the study time frame in direct
response to new knowledge gained or developments the researcher was not aware
of at the time of the initial design phase (p. 2). Action research allows such fluidity
with its framework and works effectively as a qualitative data collection approach
for this kind of study (Herr & Anderson, 2015).
Overview of Research Approach Used in this Study

Action research is defined best by shifting the locus of control from the professional or academic researcher to those individuals who have traditionally been termed the subjects of the research (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Action research is currently found under many varying terms, such as: participatory action research; practitioner research; collaborative action research; educative research; community-based participatory research; feminist action research; advocacy research; etc. (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The term action research is one that facilitates the researcher to inquire by or with insiders of a certain community or issue but never on or to them (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 3).

The practitioner action research method allows practitioners to use their knowledge base to share it with others and creates a reflective practice linking one another through a common cause, allowing action to be taken to mediate for change in a given area (Wilson V., 2016). Action research initially emerged from the educational field and has been primarily used in the educational realm; however, “any practitioner in a social practice who conducts research could find action research a useful tool” (Wilson V., 2016, p. 63). Action research can allow the practitioner’s input into a social setting, gaining valuable insight into the issue under scrutiny, and with proper implementation of data gained, lead to significant change in the environment being investigated (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Wilson, 2016).
Action research fit this particular study in that the results this researcher found, through the interview process of active practitioners within the field, may lead to a positive social change in the specific geographical region being targeted. This researcher also anticipated the research results to be adaptable for use in other regions, with the potential for global use. Those who have been actively studying and working within the genre of workplace bullying have a knowledge base like no other body, and to this researcher’s knowledge, have not been interviewed to consolidate this information into one body of work.

The overarching focal concept within this researcher’s design was the ethical “duty of care”, as outlined in Professor John Oates Six Principles: “1) compliance with protocol; 2) informed consent; 3) openness and integrity; 4) protection from harm; 5) confidentiality; and 6) professional codes of practice and ethics” (Petre & Rugg, 2010, p. 107). These were the underlying guiding principles for the basis of this research, along with the Florida Institute of Technology’s governing body of rules and regulations for all researchers at the institution.

The main body of this research was conducted to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific geographic region of north Alabama. It was this researcher’s hope that results of this study be used to benefit organizations with a mixed workforce of both federal government employees and contracted employees working side-by-side, as this is a unique labor force existing within the northern region of the state.
At the practical level, this study aimed to bring attention to the issue of workplace bullying within the same service area and highlight the need for positive change in the local workforce culture, starting with the education of local leadership on the issue. The goal was also to use the collected data to aid local leadership in dealing effectively with, and potentially eradicating, the prevalence of workplace bullying in federal government contracting facilities where it may exist.

At the personal level, the study allowed this researcher to become knowledgeable in the field of workplace bullying and use the information gained to create a more positive workplace experience for persons employed in the northern Alabama region. The researcher also desired to educate leaders within the community regarding the importance of recognizing and dealing effectively with this issue, thereby enhancing the lives of our local workforce and community as a whole.

The strength of the research design centered on the fact that SMEs have decades of knowledge and hands-on experience with anti-bullying policies, procedures, and academic inquiry. An anti-bullying workplace policy and procedure model created, based on SMEs’ knowledge, has the potential to make a vital impact on organizations and the human workforce population globally, if implemented correctly and thoughtfully over time.

The limitations of the research design were the restricted time frame of 10 weeks for responses and budget constraints held by this researcher. With unlimited
funds, personal face-to-face interviews or small focus groups could have been conducted with SMEs to gain further insight and input from each participant for a deeper understanding of the issues and greater knowledge of the subject matter.

Opportunities anticipated from the outcomes of the research were to make a significant contribution to the Northern Alabama regional workforce in the reduction of the incidents of workplace bullying. Additional opportunities have the potential for a more global reach of influence, as many of the contracting corporations represented in this area may be able to replicate the models and policies in other geographic locations across the globe. Challenges anticipated regarding outcomes from the research focused on potential paradigm shifts concerning the awareness, understanding, and critical implications of workplace bullying. Initial challenges also anticipated are local leadership to consider workplace bullying as a real and threatening factor to the workforce and the fiscal health of the corporation.

Potential directions for future continuous improvement, as an outcome of the research, were items such as: a) pre-and-post questionnaires of local workforce satisfaction regarding workforce bullying acts; b) continuous multi-media community-level dialogue regarding workplace bullying—(local radio/TV/spots regularly covering workplace bullying issues); c) educational workshops for managers and leadership; d) social media campaigns regarding anti-workplace bullying initiatives; e) local workplace bullying hotlines created for targets to call
for help/advice; f) all local corporations begin to adopt and implement active codes of conduct/ethics covering bullying in the workplace; g) all local corporations host regular mandatory training regarding anti-workplace bullying; and h) all local corporations have zero-tolerance policies in place regarding workplace bullying.

Population of Participants

Personal semi-structured interviews were conducted with SMEs actively working in academia, researching, writing, studying, consulting, and teaching on the subject matter of workplace bullying across the United States. Personal interviews were also conducted with a network of professionals in the fields of mental health, employee relations, and the legal system and who have been actively working to advance the end of American workplace bullying. A majority of which had affiliation to the Workplace Bullying Institute, which is a global thought leader and research organization in the field of workplace bullying.

This particular group of individuals are well known experts in the field of workplace bullying within the American work environment and a vast majority have published or aided in the publication of seminal works regarding the elimination of this issue in the American environment. It was this researcher’s intent to consolidate their vast knowledge into one academic work through interviews to aid the working population of north Alabama in reducing workplace bullying, concentrating on federal government contractors and their specific work environment.
The pool of potential SMEs for this study was approximately 65 highly educated individuals, many whom work directly with the Workplace Bullying Institute and/or are published authors, researchers, and advocates regarding anti-workplace bullying efforts. Direct contact means for 61 potential participants was obtained through exhaustive on-line searches through the Workplace Bullying Institute’s website of recommended experts. Of the 61 potential SMEs with contact information available, two were inaccurate, leaving a total potential participant population pool of 59. The SME participant pool consisted of 37 females (63 %), and 22 males (37 %). The actual completion rate of return for this research study was 35.59%, with 21 SMEs choosing to participate. Participant gender breakdown was 9 males and 12 females participating in the study.

All hardware and software used for all participant interactions in this study were tested between the researcher and the researcher’s assistant prior to the implementation of the research. All research followed the protocols defined by the IRB regulations and had prior approval from the University department.

Selection of Participants

The research was interview-driven with purposeful selection used, as the participants are expert academicians and professionals studying and working to eliminate this issue from the American workplace. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were used exclusively within this research study. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defined an SME as: “a person with bona fide expert
knowledge about what it takes to do a particular job” (OPM.GOV, 2016). Many of the SMEs interviewed hold doctorates within their respective fields and have been researching workplace bullying for decades in conjunction with the Workplace Bullying Institute, adding to the overall body of knowledge in this field.

The American National Research Council (2000) conducted an extensive study, and concluded that “Ph.D.’s who are trained to be inquisitive, to be creative, and to challenge established wisdom, will provide new leadership and be catalysts for change…” (Morris, et al., 2000). It is this creative wisdom that fostered the catalyst for change, along with the ability for “experts to develop automaticity in their behavior to allow conscious processing of more complex information”, and “impose meaning on ambiguous stimuli”, along with their ability to “represent problems in qualitatively different ways than do novices” (Berliner, 2002, p. 464).

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation in this practitioner action research method consisted of a computer with video and recording capabilities, a high speed reliable Internet connection, a speaker system, a digital recording mechanism, a digital interview instrument, one private office environment, one personal digital recording device for backup, a transcribing service, one research assistant, and this researcher. Each SME respondent chose a convenient time and place of his/her choosing to complete the narrative interview questionnaire. Participants participated by input of responses to each research question through SurveyMonkey®. Open-ended sections
for responses were recorded by way of the written word, and by follow-up telephone conversations at the time chosen by the SME participants. This approach was used as an effective means to be sure that the participants’ own actual written words were captured, instead of just listening to responses that could potentially be misunderstood (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As recommended by Herr and Anderson (2015), a research assistant was also used as a secondary transcriptionist to verify and validate all recorded findings for accuracy, and served to minimize errors and omissions.

**Procedures**

As recommended by Herr and Anderson (2015) procedures for this action research were as follows:

1. Letters of introduction/participant recruitment (pre-approved by the Dissertation Advisor and the IRB Committee) were emailed to all potential participants, detailing this researcher’s full intent and all study parameters. The letters of introduction/participant recruitment invited SMEs to participate, clearly stating no obligations or monetary rewards were involved, and outlined their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. Refer to Appendix B for the Letter of Introduction/Participant Recruitment email. A consent form, pre-approved by the IRB Committee of the University, was included as an attachment (see Appendix C).
2. Follow-up email correspondence was sent six days later, to those SMEs who had not yet responded, with an additional phone call to those whose work or home numbers were available and appropriate to contact.

3. A third attempt at communication to those potential participants who had yet to respond was sent six days later to once again seek further SME involvement in this research study.

4. Once each individual participant received the signed Consent Forms, approved by the University’s IRB board, qualitative interviews were scheduled at the date and time of the participant’s choosing, within the researcher’s 10-week window. The participants were told to set aside approximately 45 minutes for the inquiry, or longer if the participant chose to go into greater detail. Refer to Appendix C for the Florida Institute of Technology Consent Form used in this research.

5. Correspondence was also sent to each participant following the completion of the individual interview process to thank each for his/her participation and insight. Refer to Appendix D for the Final Participant Email Thank You.

6. Data collection will be covered in detail in the following segment.

   **Data Collection**

   A qualitative design for interviewing was used within this research study, which allowed this researcher to gain valuable insight and information from SMEs
regarding best practices to be gleaned from interviews and to facilitate the creation of an anti-bullying policy for the unique mixed workforce of the northern Alabama region. This qualitative study had an approximate 10-week period for completion and SMEs had two sources of data delivery: SurveyMonkey® and follow-up telephone interviews. These mediums were chosen due to their cost effectiveness, ease of use for the participant, the ability to effectively record the interview responses for future transcribing and appropriate coding, while allowing some anonymity for the participant.

The research assistant provided secondary authentication of the data by conducting a secondary transcription of all recorded participant responses (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Hand coding of all responses was completed by the researcher and double-checked by the research assistant (Maxwell, 2013). The assistant also served as a secondary check for entering data into the coding software NVivo®. NVivo® was used to conduct the final qualitative data coding and helped organize, analyze, and find insights and connections that are not possible manually and rigorously back up findings with evidence (Zamawe, 2015).

Validity was considered through reflexivity, tests of rich data, respondent validation, a search for discrepant evidence and negative cases, and triangulation (Maxwell, 2013). A detailed description of each of these areas is found in the upcoming segment of this paper: Reliability and Validity.
This practitioner action qualitative research study proposed a minimal level of risk to participants; and, as all subjects are SMEs, it is the most appropriate format considering the subject matter. Herr and Anderson (2015) relate action research develops over time as a series of processes beginning with: 1) plan of action; 2) action on the plan; 3) observation of the effects of the action; and 4) reflection on the effects for future proposals and strategic planning (p. 5).

This researcher developed the plan of action while narrowing the field within the subject matter of workplace bullying. This researcher determined SMEs all held the necessary knowledge to consolidate their input into a single project, creating policies and procedures for the north Alabama regional workforce to implement.

The action on the plan was developed after researching differing research methods and finding the action research method as the best fit. The action research method allowed the researcher the freedom to openly solicit for social change within the environment, using qualitative interview techniques (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Observation of the effects of the action occurred during and after the interview phase of the research as the interview questions were answered by the SMEs. Knowledge was gained and follow-up questions were answered based on the responses from the SME (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Reflections on the effects for future proposals and strategic planning occurred when the resulting data was analyzed (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Future proposals may also come from
obtaining ongoing and periodic outcomes from actual workplaces after the policies and procedures are implemented.

**Data Analysis**

The approach used in this study followed the accepted and proven approaches outlined by Maxwell (2013), who suggests data be analyzed in the following manner:

a) Interviews will be transcribed, coded, and categorized, and analyzed on an ongoing basis as a source for further questions, the emergence of themes, and as an eventual source for organizing patterns of responses across individuals;

b) Field notes will further serve as a basis for discussion, coding and categorizing, reflection, and member checking;

c) To verify findings and themes, this researcher will undertake extensive member checking of findings and transcripts on an ongoing basis;

d) To further contrast and compare interview data with other sources, this researcher collected and inventoried relevant artifacts on an ongoing basis throughout the study; and

e) To deepen the understanding of incoming data, the researcher discussed field observations extensively. (p. 157)
Reliability and Validity

This research study utilized tests and techniques outlined by Maxwell (2013) that include the following:

1. Reflexivity: admitted to the interviewees that this researcher is a part of the world being studied and has an innate bias that workplace bullying is a negative act.

2. Rich data: maintained verbatim transcripts of the interviews, not just this researcher’s notes on what is believed to be the intent or the main ideas from each individual interview.

3. Respondent validation: gained insight commonly referred to as member checks from those being studied by asking follow-up questions to participants for clarity, or restating what the researcher believes to be the intent of each participant’s answer.

4. Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases: the research assistant served as a secondary transcriber to double-check the researcher for errors and omissions and continuity of data management. The Dissertation Advisor served as a third source of validity of study findings.

5. Triangulation: the use of reliable mediums for interviews allowed participants to have written input as well as verbal input. Participants, all SMEs, were diverse geographically in that they were located all over
the country and globe, were diversified in age and professional achievements, both male and female genders were represented in the participant pool, and have attained a multitude of varying educational accomplishments. Specifically, 19 SMEs from the U.S., one from Australia, and one from Canada served as the full complement of 21 participants.

The researcher was diligent in her interview techniques toward each participant and employed proper guidance from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition (2010), Chapter one, section eleven, which denotes the widely accepted “Rights and Confidentiality of Research Participants” (pp. 16-17). The guidance of Maxwell (2013) was also diligently followed concerning verification techniques of data collection to include:

a) Member-checks of interview transcripts and field notes;

b) Actively seeking discrepant evidence by using informed interviewing techniques, emphasizing discrepant evidence in member checks; and

c) Seeking informed input from credentialed colleagues and committee members while undertaking reflection and analysis of interview transcripts, artifacts, and field notes. (p. 157)

Generalizability

Herr and Anderson (2015) hypothesize “for qualitative and action researchers, it makes more sense to think about how knowledge is transferred from

84
one setting to another…of how results of action research are generalized, or transferred to other settings (often referred to as external validity) …” (p. 74). According to Maxwell (2013), qualitative research designs are not intended to be generalizable, although some themes may have similar contexts (p. 157).

Findings of this study provided rich descriptions and insights gained from SMEs to be used and implemented by top executive decision makers, human resource personnel, and leadership in the corporate government contracting arena within a specific geographic area of north Alabama. The final results were intended to facilitate the development of usable frameworks to enhance and improve the local workplace environment.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter three began with a discussion on ethical considerations and a reiteration of the research questions guiding this study. The design, approach, and instrumentation were also covered along with participant population and selection. The final portion of the chapter analyzed the procedures used within the study and data collection methods as well as: data analysis; reliability and validity; and generalizability.
Chapter 4: FINDINGS

Overview

This practitioner’s qualitative action research study sought to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific region of north Alabama. Emphasis was given to organizations whose workforce was mixed and consisted of federal government employees as well as contracted staffers.

Research Questions

Four central research questions guided the framework of this study; they are:

1. What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?
2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?
3. What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?
4. What steps should corporate leaders in the northern Alabama workforce region take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?
Two sub-questions developed to guide the framework and understand the importance of mitigating workplace bullying within the workforce in the northern Alabama area even further, are:

1. What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying in the north Alabama workplace?

2. How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?

**Key Themes**

Key themes from the collected participants’ data concerning the issue of workplace bullying emerged in the areas of: impact; important ways to address workplace bullying (i.e., policies, procedures, education and training); roles of leadership, management, and human resources; and ways to diminish workplace bullying. Proper implementation of the insights and themes garnered from this study have the potential to empower local leadership to raise awareness of the existence of the workplace bullying phenomenon. Findings from this study as outlined later in this chapter hold the possibility to enhance long-term, lasting effects in dealing with workplace bullying.

**Research Design Compatibility**

The use of the practitioner qualitative action research design allowed this researcher to gain expert knowledge from practitioners, or SMEs, working daily in the field. Results included timely, accurate intake of data; knowledge gained from individuals who have spent years actively participating in both research and
outreach in this field; the consolidation of years of expertise; and the ability to use results in real-time to enhance the workplace environment. Herr and Anderson (2015) support this in their statement: “Action research is oriented to some action or cycle of actions that organizational or community members have taken, are taking, or wish to take to address a particular problematic situation. …Action research is best done in collaboration with others who have a stake in the problem under investigation” (p. 4).

**Organization of the Remainder of this Chapter**

The first section of this chapter breaks down the individual demographics from each participant as gained through participant answers to interview questions. The second section consolidates the participant’s demographics into visual form. The data presented in the third section highlights background questions asking SMEs to define workplace bullying in his/her own words and the reasoning behind their activism in this field, respectively. The fourth section covers the findings of the study pertaining to the responses garnered from the research open-ended narrative interview questions. The fifth section is the synthesis and summary of the data, and the sixth section is this study’s contribution to applied practice.

**Participant Demographics**

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were chosen as the participants within this action practitioner research study. The method chosen allowed the sharing of information by practitioners within the chosen field to link together through a
common cause. This linkage has the potential to lead to significant changes regarding workplace bullying in the U.S. (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Wilson, 2016). Interviews were completed with 21 SMEs located in the following U.S. states and countries: Australia, Canada, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. This study sought specific demographics from each participant, which are outlined in the sections below.

**Individual Participant Demographics**

Participant one is a male, between the ages of 41 and 50. He has obtained his doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 11-15 years.

Participant two is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant three is a female, between the ages of 61 and 70. She has obtained her master’s degree and has completed a post-master’s Education Specialist degree. She has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 20+ years.

Participant four is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his bachelor’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 16-20 years.
Participant five is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 1-5 years.

Participant six is a female, between the ages of 61 and 70. She has obtained her doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant seven is a female, between the ages of 41 and 50. She has obtained her doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 16-20 years.

Participant eight is a female, between the ages of 51 and 60. She has obtained her doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 11-15 years.

Participant nine is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his master’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 11-15 years.

Participant ten is a female, between the ages of 51 and 60. She has obtained her doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant 11 is a female, between the ages of 61 and 70. She has obtained her doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.
Participant 12 is a female, between the ages of 41 and 50. She has obtained her master’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant 13 is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his master’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant 14 is a female, between the ages of 51 and 60. She has obtained her doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant 15 is a female, between the ages of 61 and 70. She has obtained her master’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 20+ years.

Participant 16 is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his doctorate degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 16-20 years.

Participant 17 is a male, between the ages of 51 and 60. He has obtained his master’s degree and has completed post-master’s degree studies and has been working in the anti-bullying arena for 11-15 years.

Participant 18 is a male, over the age of 70. He has obtained his bachelor’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 11-15 years.
Participant 19 is a female, between the ages of 51-60. She has obtained her master’s degree and works in the healthcare field. She has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 6-10 years.

Participant 20 is a female, between the ages of 51 and 60. She has obtained a certification and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 1-5 years.

Participant 21 is a female, between the ages of 51 and 60. She has obtained her master’s degree and has been working in the anti-workplace bullying arena for 1-5 years.

Collective Participant Demographics

The average participant questionnaire was completed within approximately 1.5 hours. Follow up interviews averaged 29 minutes. Submissions to the questionnaire were completed over one month’s time, from January 17th to February 15th, 2017, numbering 21 in total. Collective demographics for all participant SMEs are seen in the following Table 2.
Table 2. Description of Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Functional Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>Nonprofit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P15</td>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P16</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P17</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P18</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P19</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P20</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P21</td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highest levels of education obtained by each participant was asked within the demographic section of the participant questions. Table 3 provides a visual representation of the educational levels achieved of the participants. It should be noted that over 85% of SME participants have achieved a Master’s degree or higher within their respective fields.
Table 3. Highest Education Level Achieved Composite. *Special Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percent of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Masters or Higher</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender of the participants were gained from the demographic question to determine gender of each participant. Table 4 provides a visual representation of the gender breakdown of the participants.

Table 4. Gender Breakdown of Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Participant Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants ages were requested within 10 year ranges and were found between the ages of 41 and over 70. Table 5 provides a visual representation of the percentages for each age group represented.

Table 5. Age Breakdown of Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Participant</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Participant Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background Interview Questions

There were two personal questions asked after the demographic inquiry in the research questionnaire:

1. What prompted your interest/work/advocacy in the workplace bullying field?
2. In your own words, please define workplace bullying.

The two sub-sections below highlight the participants’ responses and are charted in Tables 6 and 7.

Reasoning Behind Activism. One question asked each SME participant what prompted his/her interest in working and advocating in the workplace bullying field. Table 6 below is a summary of all participant responses concerning his/her reason or reasons for working within the anti-workplace bullying movement. Frequency within this research project is defined as the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the answers given by the SMEs.
Table 6. Findings in order of Frequency. *Background Question:* What prompted your interest/work advocacy in the workplace bullying field? (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme and Sub-Theme*</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Personal Experience as Target</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Observation of Bullying</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Interest/Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Work Progression</td>
<td>2**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Theme: Policy work addressing WPB</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Theme: Harassment Field Work addressing WPB</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Wanting to Facilitate Change</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Client Needs-Law</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Background Question-21 Participants

**Total including sub-themes

**Defining Workplace Bullying.** Another personal question asked each SME participant to define workplace bullying in his/her own words. This researcher initially hand coded the SME responses to gain a better understanding of the overall emerging themes of this definition from participants. This was used as a validity check for the final coding responses. NVivo© software was used for the final output coding for this background question. This researcher downloaded actual written responses of participants from the narrative SurveyMonkey® questionnaire, into an Excel file, then uploaded the file into the NVivo© platform for coding. The results of both coding versions were used as an authentication of the emerging themes as outlined in the findings, placed in the order of frequency, within Table 7 below.
Table 7 is a summary outlining participant responses when asked to define workplace bullying. Once again, frequency is defined as the number of times the emerging theme was present within the participant responses.

Table 7. Findings in order of Frequency. **Background Question:** In your own words, please define workplace bullying. *(Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes*</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abusive, Unethical Behaviors</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple, Repeated, Persistent over time</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct (overt) or Indirect (covert) Actions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacting Job Performance</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or More Individuals use of Power or Position to demean or control</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data delineated above agrees with the current literature as seen in the Workplace Bullying Institute’s (Namie & Namie, The bully-free workplace, 2011) definition:

Workplace bullying is the repeated, health-harming mistreatment of an employee by one or more employees through acts of commission or omission manifested as: verbal abuse; behaviors—physical or nonverbal—that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; work sabotage, interference with production; exploitation of vulnerability—physical, social, or psychological; or some combination of one or more categories. (p. 13)
Findings

Participant Research Questions

The following were the remaining research questions answered by SMEs to gain their knowledge and correlate the results into the findings. Responses were used to achieve answers to the guiding research questions: four central research questions and two follow up research questions initially posed by the researcher and stated earlier in this chapter. Refer to Appendix E for complete list of SME Research Questions.

Short Answer Questions. The questions, as seen below, are the short answer questions posed to the SMEs for their insight and expert opinions to garner information for the overriding research questions in this study:

Research Questions:

1. What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?
2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?
3. What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?
4. What steps should corporate Leaderships in the northern Alabama workforce region take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?
Sub-Questions:

1. What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying within the north Alabama workplace?

2. How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?

**Research Questions.** This section will define each research question and sub-question and the methods used to garner the main themes from participants’ responses. Examples from SMEs are also included to further illustrate the findings, along with information from the literature review to support or refute the findings.

Hand coding was used as the preliminary system to find main themes and key ideas covered within the participants’ responses. The coding software NVivo© was then used to authenticate the hand coding and find additional values not yet seen. This method was proposed by Creswell (2014) in his statement: “The basic idea behind these programs [NVivo©] is that using the computer is an efficient means for storing and locating qualitative data. Although the researcher still needs to go through each line of text (as in hand coding by going through transcriptions) and assign codes, this process may be faster and more efficient than hand coding” (p. 195).

Maxwell (2013) also recommends this method, stating: “The main categorizing strategy in qualitative research is coding. …Another form of categorizing analysis involves organizing the data into broader themes and issues” (p. 107). Lyn Richards (2015) agrees in her opinion that researcher, under most
circumstances, now use software and “…by using software they are better able to do justice to their data. And, significantly, the use of computers has directed researcher attention far more to the quality of the data records” (p. 66). This researcher followed the suggestions of Maxwell (2013), Creswell (2014), and Richards (2015) for coding and organizing the data from the participants’ responses.

**Research Question 1.** What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?

Initial hand coding of all responses to question one was completed to serve as a comparative analysis and validity check for the final findings. Main themes and key results from the hand coding process were entered into the data analytic coding software, NVivo ©. This software was then used to further delineate the frequency of the terms and phrases used within the SME narratives. Words and phrases were used to search within each participant’s response to research question one. The resulting coding inquiries, or findings, are outlined below and sorted according to their frequency. Representative quotes from participants, along with relevance to prevailing literature, are also delineated in the tables within this section.

Two sub-themes emerged from the response data regarding research question one and they are (a) workplace bullying impacts the individual federal or contracting employee; and (b) workplace bullying impacts the federal government
and contracting organization. Frequent responses from SMEs illustrated that employee creativity and productivity would be at risk from workplace bullying, along with higher turnover rates, psychological damage to the employee, lowered morale in the workplace, and health issues arising as a direct result from bullying acts with the most serious act being workplace related suicide. Loss of productivity and creativity is clearly illustrated within the response from P13 when he stated, “Absenteeism or loss of productivity-High levels of staff turnover and associated recruitment and training costs-The breakdown of teams and work relationships leading to reduced efficiency, productivity and an increase in errors…”. P16 mirrors this opinion in his statement, “Loss of productivity and morale, serious physical and mental health impacts, loss of reputation and goodwill on the part of the organization”. The current literature also supports this idea as seen in the research findings of Lutgen-Sandvik (2013) and Olive and Cangemi (2015) when they state that reduced productivity and less output from downtrodden workers remaining at their positions, often termed presenteeism, are often a direct result of workplace bullying.

Psychological damage is reiterated as an impact in P8’s response, “Short and long-term psychological impact, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. Targets may need professional counseling and recovery time. Negative impact on company culture. Negative impact on organization. Reduction in the ability to hire good talent. Turnover of talent.” Current literature supports this as well as seen in
findings from researchers Jenkins et al. (2011) and Longton (2014) when they relate that a continuum exists of negative mental and physical effects on the target, including an increased risk of heart disease, depression and anxiety to cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and even suicide. Bullying acts have an impact on time lost at work due to physical injury or illness, behavioral changes, psychological trauma, and decreased productivity (Jenkins et al., 2011; & Longton, 2014).

Impacts to the Individual Federal Worker or Contracted Employee. Impacts to the individual were coded from the SMEs’ responses and the following issues emerged: stifled creativity/decreased productivity, employee turnover, psychological, health, morale, and suicide. Data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data is displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Findings addressing research Question One--Theme: Impacts of workplace bullying on the federal or contracting employee. (Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact to Individual</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity / Productivity</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>P-10: “It destroys motivation, creativity and productivity health, well-being, in the workplace which then spreads into every nook and cranny of people's lives such as their</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in that Lutgen-Sandvik (2005) states “Another effect that follows is an increase in employee turnover when individuals feel they are no longer able to contribute to the effectiveness of the organization” (p. 21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Rates</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>P-1: “Significant employee turnover, tarnished self-esteem and reputation.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>P-9: “Short and long-term psychological impact, including anxiety, depression and PTSD.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>P-4: “Increase in cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorder, sleep disturbances, mental illness/injury (e.g., depression, anxiety, post traumatic [sic] stress disorder). Financial losses for the company.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature supports this finding when Namie (2014) reports: “Targets lose their jobs at a much higher rate than perpetrators (82% vs. 18%)” (p.8).

The literature supports this finding as stated by Jenkins et al., (2011); Longton (2014); Olive and Cangemi (2015); and McDonald, Brown and Smith who state, “Symptoms of those affected range from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), to heart disease, depression, anxiety, …behavioral changes, mental illness, diminished self-esteem, and in the most extreme cases, workplace bullying has resulted in work-related suicides.”

The literature supports this finding when Jenkins et al., (2011) and Longton (2014) state: “Negative effects on individual targets include increased illness, psychological trauma, job loss, decreased productivity, mental illness, depression and anxiety, PTSD, increased heart disease incidence and even suicide” (Jenkins et al., 2011; Longton, 2014).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morale</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>P-3: “Low morale, low productivity, hostility, aggressive outbursts, personnel turnover, suicide, homicide, loss of revenue, recidivism, dehumanization of those who are targeted, culture of distrust and fear.”</th>
<th>Literature supports this finding as seen in statements by Arunchand and Ramanathan (2013) in their study finding: “When this employee-employer relationship is not a healthy one, this leads to low employee morale resulting in pessimism and low productivity for the corporation.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>P-21: “It can create physical ailments caused by sustained stress responses (e.g. ulcers, migraines, high blood pressure, etc [sic]), mental disorders such as depression and anxiety (which often lead to suicide attempts or suicide completions) [sic]”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding when Sansone and Sansone (2015) relate some of the emotional and psychological effects are increased mental stress, fatigue in women, lack of vigor in men, anxiety, depression and at worst, work related suicide (p. 32).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Impacts to the Federal or Contracting Organization.* Impacts to the organization were coded from SME responses and the following issues emerged: productivity, culture, cost, turnover, goodwill and reputation, revenue, recruitment and training, and legal issues. Data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data is displayed in Table 9 below.
Table 9. Findings addressing research Question One--Theme: Impacts of workplace bullying on the federal or contracting organization. *Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact to Organization</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>P-5: “A toxic bullying-in-the-workplace environment can lead to an unpleasant work environment, create higher employee turn-over, increase days off, lower morale, lower productivity, lower quality of work and innovative ideas, etc [sic].”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding when Sharon Longton (2014) relates bullying acts have an impact on time lost at work due to physical injury or illness, behavioral changes, psychological trauma, and decreased productivity (p. 243).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Company Culture</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>P-3: “Training to examine the culture in the workplace that might be contributing to or reinforcing the bullying and ways to change that culture from top to bottom and inside out.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in the statement made by McDonald et al. (2015): “…bullying fosters reactions in employees going beyond the emotional turmoil faced by the target. They claim the effect is to foster undesirable work place situations and actions on behalf of the beleaguered staff. This may take the form of severe incivility, violence, anger, or even theft or sabotage as covert retaliatory actions due to the abuse” (p. 28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>P-12: “Because it will affect the the [sic] productivity of the employees and this has high hidden cost associated that will eventually show...”</td>
<td>The literature supports the finding when Sutton (2010) concludes that costs associated with this loss can be astronomical for even one such instance to a corporation when management considers all the associated financial implications (p. 47).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Rates</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>P-21: “A workforce affected by the wrath of WPB can only result in reduced productivity, task inaccuracy, low employee morale, depleted motivation to contribute to the organization's success, high turnover rates.”</td>
<td>The literature supports the finding as seen in Olive and Cangemi’s statement: “Reduced productivity and less output are often a direct result of workplace bullying [;] This is generally followed by high turnover rates as individuals leave to pursue organizations where they are valued and feel protected” (p. 21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodwill and Reputation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>P-16: “Loss of productivity and morale, serious physical and mental health impacts, loss of reputation and goodwill on the part of the organization.”</td>
<td>The literature regarding this finding is supported with Olive and Cangemi’s (2015) statement: “Another cascading effect of allowing bullying to go unchecked in the organization is a reputation of a hostile work environment in the stakeholder market.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>P-4: “Financial losses due to increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, possible worker compensation claims due to accidents caused by employee distraction.”</td>
<td>The literature supports the finding when Olive and Cangemi (2015) relate professional workers are leaving their jobs at a rate of two million a year due to their perception of being treated unfairly on the job at a cost of $64 billion to the U.S. economy (p. 21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>P-13: “High levels of staff turnover and associated recruitment and training costs.”</td>
<td>The literature supports the finding when Sansone and Sansone (2015), and Buttigieg, Bryant, Hanley, and Liu (2013) state: “Increased absenteeism due to bullying in the workplace along with unemployment for those who can no longer cope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?

Initial hand coding of all responses to question two was completed to serve as a comparative analysis and validity check for the final findings. Main themes and key results from the hand coding process were entered into the data analytic coding software, NVivo©. This software was then used to further delineate the frequency of the terms and phrases used within the SME narratives. Words and phrases were used to search within each participant’s response to research question two.

Two sub-themes emerged from the response data regarding research question two: (a) workplace bullying is important to address for the federal or contracting employer; and (b) workplace bullying is important to address for the federal or contracting employee. Safety, productivity, and cost were frequently

| Legal Issues | 8 | P-4: “They should understand the financial and legal risks to the organization if bullying is not properly investigated and disciplinary actions are not consistent [sic].” | The literature supports this finding as related by McDonald et al. (2015) when they observe in their research the effects bullying may have on the fiscal health of the overall organization… [, and] the business may encounter direct expenses while defending law suits, health-related complaints and workers’ compensation claims from affected employees (p. 28). |

within the current perceived unsafe work environment are just two of the negative consequences to the organization.”
mentioned in responses by SMEs regarding the needs of the federal or contracting employee and employer, as illustrated in P11’s statement regarding safety,

It is an ethical issue and a morale and potentially legal issue. They have a responsibility to create a safe environment where their workers want to be, where they work to the height of their ability, where they do not harm others. All of this is the employer’s responsibility.

P7 referred to productivity when she stated, “Pervasive bullying will reduce employee productivity, lead to back-stabbing, and potentially ultimately destroy the integrity of the workplace. Costs were mentioned within P16’s comment, “Employee morale, reputation as a good employer, reduce costs of turnover and health care costs”.

Current literature supports this finding as seen when researchers Baillien et al. (2016), Blackstock et al. (2015), DeVos and Kirsten (2015), and McDonald et al. (2015) agree that fiscal costs to the organization emanating from workplace bullying range from workers’ compensation claims, health-related claims, increased turnover, reduced motivation thus reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and internal staffing conflicts.

Important to the Federal or Contracting Employer: Addressing workplace bullying and the importance to the employer were coded from the SMEs’ responses and the following issues emerged: health; safety; value; culture; and success. The resulting coding inquiries, or findings, are outlined below and sorted according to
their frequency. Representative quotes from participants, along with relevance to prevailing literature, are also delineated within Table 10 below.

Table 10. Findings addressing research Question Two--Theme: Addressing workplace bullying is important to the federal or contracting employer. (Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Importance</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>P4 –“Employees may develop physical and mental health problems due to bullying. Increased health care needs. Drain on personal lives, e.g., increased marital difficulties, suicidal tendencies.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding, as seen in McDonald, Brown, and Smith’s (2015) statement regarding the effects bullying may have on the fiscal health of the overall organization. They espouse the business may encounter direct expenses while defending law suits, health-related complaints, and workers’ compensation claims from affected employees (McDonald et al., 2015, p. 28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>P2 –“Employees have the right and desire to work in a safe environment.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding, as Aleassa and Megdadi (2014) relate: managers should focus their efforts on addressing bullying and psychological ownership at the same time. This will create a secure and supportive environment contributing to the employee’s hierarchy of needs allowing protection from possible humiliation and restoring the sense of power balance within the corporation (p. 163).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P21 – “Employees want to know that the organization cares about each member of the team and that what they do has value.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding, as specified by multiple researchers in the idea that values-based management energizes employees using hope and aspiration instead of using fear and failure or punishment as motivating factors in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
workplace (Hemp & Stewart, 2004; Winter & Jackson, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>P8 –“Employees want to work at a place that is positive, productive and where people are treated humanely.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding, as stated by Peacock (2015) when he shared, researchers have also found leadership in corporations should “build a culture of support in which a target can seek help to voice concerns” (p. 128).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P2 – “Because bullying prevents the development of trust which is the foundation of building a successful organization.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding, when viewing Kotter’s (1995) Step 8 of change management successful implementation: “Institutionalizing new approaches [involves] articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success. Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession” (p. 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important to the Federal or Contracting Employee.** Addressing workplace bullying and the importance to the employee were coded from the SMEs’ responses and the following issues emerged: productivity, cost, health, turnover, morale, and success. Data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data is displayed in Table 11 below.
Table 11. Findings addressing research Question Two--Theme: Addressing workplace bullying is important to the federal or contracting employee. *(Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Importance</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>P8 –“Productivity, profitability and reputation are all improved when an employer creates a positive workplace climate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>P12 –“Because it will affect the the [sic] productivity of the employees and this has high hidden cost associated that will eventually show up in the bottom line of the company.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>P4 –“Employees may develop physical and mental health problems due to bullying. Increased health care needs. Drain on personal lives, e.g., increased marital difficulties, suicidal tendencies.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>P10 –“If you allow an uncivil environment to develop, the best people will leave.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding when reviewing the opinions of researchers when they espouse reduced productivity and less output from downtrodden workers remaining at their positions, often termed presenteeism, are often a direct result of workplace bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013; Olive &amp; Cangemi, 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding, as Graafland and Schouten (2012) agree profits increase when there is less turnover, more trust within the workforce, lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and a more positive work attitude (p. 379).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding, as seen in Longton’s (2014) workplace bullying definition as unreasonable and repeated acts of an individual or group focused on an employee or group intended to degrade, undermine, humiliate, or create a risk to the safety and health of the employee (p. 243).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding as Sansone and Sansone (2015) agree increased absenteeism due to bullying in the workplace, along with unemployment for those who</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
can no longer cope within the current perceived unsafe work environment, (are just two of the negative consequences to the organization (p. 32).

Morale | 7 | P21-“Consequently, this results in employee loyalty, longevity, dedication, increased satisfaction, and high motivation to contribute to the organization’s success.” | The literature supports this finding when viewing these researcher’s sentiment: When this employee-employer relationship is not a healthy one, this leads to low employee morale resulting in pessimism and low productivity for the corporation (Arunchand & Ramanathan, 2013).

Success | 5 | P15-“Empowerment, job satisfaction, desire to succeed, loyalty toward employer.” | The literature supports this finding when viewing the research conclusion concurring that one of the true rewards of leadership lies within the positive changes a person in such a position can make in the lives of others, developing the meaning within one’s own life when they foster others success (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

**Research Question 3.** What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?

Initial hand coding of all responses to question three was completed to serve as a comparative analysis and validity check for the final findings. Main themes and key results from the hand coding process were entered into the data analytic coding software, NVivo©. This software was then used to further delineate the frequency of the terms and phrases used within the SME narratives. Words and phrases were used to search within each participant’s response to research question

112
three. The resulting coding inquiries, or findings, are outlined below and sorted according to their frequency. Representative quotes from participants, along with relevance to prevailing literature, are also delineated in Tables 12-15 in the sections to follow.

Three sub-themes emerged from the response data regarding research question three and they were (a) policies should be in place; (b) procedures should be in place; and (c) education and training are necessary. Frequently mentioned within the responses of the SMEs were policies such as anti-bullying with consequences, procedures for safe and impartial reporting supporting targets, and the need for education and training. Anti-bullying and consequences was covered within P7’s response:

1. Employer should make it clear that the organization is committed to a workplace free from harassment and discrimination for all. 2. Any behaviors that create a hostile work environment will not be tolerated. 3. Fair, timely investigation of any complaints will occur. 4. Those found to violate these policies will face employment consequences.

P13 supports the need for safe and impartial reporting within his response below:

Procedures clearly described regarding who victims can talk to and a clear process as to what will occur when issues are brought to the attention of a supervisor/manager/HR. Procedures regarding what steps will be
taken…informal resolution processes, formal investigation processes, and commentary regarding retaliation being a separate offence [sic] as well as confidentiality being maintained. Also, a clear defining of the responsibilities of all employees (contractors and volunteers included), supervisors and employers.

Necessary education and training was evident within P16’s response to this inquiry:

Broadly defining and illustrative bullying behaviors and to reinforce that tolerating bullying among leaders is as equally bad as perpetrating bullying. Training should also address issues of power and oppression and how power differentials may inherently lead to bullying behaviors or perceptions of bullying by targeted groups. Leaders should be taught about both overt behaviors and subtle behaviors and to understand how their seemingly innocent behaviors may be perceived as abrasive or bullying. Training should no [sic] just provide lecture and explanations, but provide illustrations, case studies, and practice scenarios for managers to learn how to engage in conversations, counseling, and corrective actions with abrasive and bullying employees.

Current researchers Catley, Blackwood, Forsyth, and Tappin (2017) also support this thought, stating workplace bullying has a great need for “specialised [sic] training in understanding the dynamics of workplace bullying coupled with
ensuring that HRP (Human Resource Professionals) are ‘experts’ on their own organisation [sic]” (p. 101). Cartley et al. further reiterate HRP must explicitly understand their roles in how best to manage complaints regarding workplace bullying with consistent and firm support from top leadership levels (p. 112).

*Policies in Place.* Addressing workplace bullying and the importance for policies to be enacted within the workplace were coded from the SMEs’ responses and the following issues emerged: anti-bullying/consequences; mentoring; code of conduct/guidelines; training leaders; and off-sites. Data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data are defined in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Findings addressing research Question Three--Sub-Theme: Policies should be in place to reduce workplace bullying. *(Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies Needed</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Bullying/Consequences</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>P-3: “Anti-bullying Policy: Must be clearly articulated, consistently enforced, and broadly communicated.”</td>
<td>This finding supports the literature as seen in Bame’s (2013), statement: Corporations should “establish written anti-bullying policies, develop codes of conduct, and enforce a zero-tolerance policy… [ensuring] effective leadership, values, and ethics training [as well]” (pp.125-126).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>P-2: “A role model or mentoring program that builds trust, respect, and commitment.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This finding supports the literature as seen in the following researcher’s opinion: Included in instituting policies against verbal aggression, “are reporting procedures and the formal and informal promulgation of the concept that violence and verbal aggression are unacceptable in the workplace…and supervisors [should be] modeling how interpersonal interactions should be conducted” (Spector, Coulter, Stockwell, &amp; Matz, 2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Conduct/ Guidelines</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>P-21: “Employee code of conduct which clearly defines and describes WPB.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This finding is supported within the literature as seen in the following found research: One of the most common approaches leadership can take toward a positive commitment to change when endeavoring in this effort is adopting an effective proven compliance program through the active adoption and implementation of a code of conduct or code of ethics (Robson, 2015).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Leaders</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>P-8: “Clearly define workplace bullying and the responsibilities for the CEO, officers, leaders, employees and human resources.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This literature supports this finding as seen in the research account made by Rooyen and McCormack (2013) when they found in their study, both employees as well as supervisory staff had very little appreciation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concrete skills, or specified training on effectively dealing with workplace bullying (p. 92).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off Sites</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>P-15: “Off-site contractor initiated activities with casual activities which allow co-mingling of government [sic] and contractor staff.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is supported in the literature as seen in Aleassa and Megdadi’s (2014) statement: “credible intervention strategy to curtail bullying behavior is a training program directed toward improving the quality of the social relationship” within the workplace (p. 163).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures in Place.** Addressing workplace bullying and the importance for procedures to be enacted within the workplace were coded from the SMEs’ responses and the following issues emerged: safe impartial reporting/support targets; definition/training; consequences; communication; mission/vision statement; appraisals/hiring process; and counseling/behavior modification. Data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data are defined in Table 13 below.
Table 13. Findings addressing research Question Three--Theme: Procedures should be in place to reduce workplace bullying. *(Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures Needed</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe Impartial Reporting/Support Targets</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>P-3: “Clearly outline what measures will be taken to keep the targeted employee safe at work, give him or her tools to stand up to the perpetrators, and support to keep the targeted employee from succumbing to the bullying.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in the following statement of Carden and Boyd (2013): … “various levels of support for implementing a corporate monitoring and controlling plan. that can be done by leadership on a continual basis, to include: …(b) Establish a system for easily and confidentially reporting and handling complaints;…” (p. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition/Training</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>P-8: “Provide mandatory training on the definition, emotional/psychological impact to people, and monetary costs of bullying.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in Fox and Cowan’s (2015) research: The corporation will also need to implement training for all human resource personnel regarding what constitutes workplace bullying and aid in the design of the program to mitigate it (p. 126-127).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>P-3: “Clearly outline the consequences for the bully—and any henchmen or other bystanders who played an active supporting role in the bullying.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding as seen in Fenton et al.’s, (1997) research finding: Companies should develop and host employee and supervisor training, emphasizing prevention techniques and concrete ways to reduce workplace violence, as well as a documented reporting system and widely known and understood consequences for not abiding by the regulations (p. 47).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>P-1: “Communication, touch-base points with employees and leaders, use employee opinion surveys.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The literature supports this finding in Kotter’s (1995) fourth step as referenced here: “Communicating the vision. Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies. Teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition” (p. 2).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission/Vision Statement</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>P-2: “Development of mission and vision statements that develop a culture of respect and honesty.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The literature supports this finding in Kotter’s (1995) seventh step as referenced here: “Consolidating improvements and producing still more change. Using increased credibility to
change systems, structures, and policies that don't fit the vision. Hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision. Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents” (p. 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appraisals/Hiring Process</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>P-18: “Supervisors and employees should be informed of the policy when hired and then once a year. They should also be told whom to contact with a problem.”</th>
<th>Supporting this finding is the literature found here: Leadership might also consider adding an anti-bullying line item to the annual divisional performance evaluation of key leadership for emphasis (Barney, 2011).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling /Behavior Modification</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>P-16: “Procedures should allow for multiple options to address bullying, not just utilization of progressive discipline and other behavior modification approaches that don't address underlying causes.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in Kotter’s (1995) eighth step as referenced here: “Institutionalizing new approaches. Articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success. Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession” (p. 2).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Education and Training.* Addressing workplace bullying and the importance for procedures to be enacted within the workplace were coded from the SMEs’
responses and the following issues emerged: recommended training, frequency of training, and mediums of training.

The findings in Tables 14-16 were not supported or refuted within this study’s literature review as they are suggestions for implementation from the SMEs’ regarding the policies and procedures data referenced and tied to the literature in the above tables. This ancillary data was worth noting however, because experts within the field have suggestions for the practitioner regarding instituting the education and training within the organization. The data from SME responses in Tables 14-16 highlight recommendations for (a) types of training; (b) mediums to use; and, (c) suggested timing. This researcher also recommends future research to be conducted regarding these responses. Table 14 below illustrates the participant’s responses regarding types of anti-workplace bullying training an organization should offer employees.

Table 14. Recommended Training Type. (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Training</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Evaluations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistleblower Protection</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Souvenirs, Wearables, Accessories, and Gifts (SWAG)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 below illustrates the participant’s responses regarding the suggested mediums to use when training the workforce regarding anti-workplace bullying.

Table 15. Mediums of Training. (*Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediums of Training</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Multimedia</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Test</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One on One</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Site</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Site</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 below illustrates the participant’s responses regarding the suggested timing of training regarding anti-workplace bullying.

Table 16. Timing of Training. (*Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Conducted</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-boarding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Going</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 2-3 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Annually</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need of the Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4. What steps should corporate leaders in the northern Alabama workforce region take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?

Initial hand coding of all responses to question four was completed to serve as a comparative analysis and validity check for the final findings. Main themes and key results from the hand coding process were entered into the data analytic coding software NVivo©. This software was then used to further delineate the frequency of the terms and phrases used within the SME narratives. Words and phrases were used to search within each participant’s response pertaining to research question four. The resulting coding inquiries, or findings, are outlined below and sorted according to their frequency. Representative quotes from participants, along with relevance to prevailing literature, are also delineated within the table.

Three sub-themes emerged from the response data regarding research question four and they are (a) internal steps, (b) external steps, and (c) barriers to change. Frequently occurring findings within responses of the SMEs regarding what necessities should be enacted by north Alabama leadership included team mentality/equal treatment, convincing lawmakers and business leaders of the reality and costs of workplace bullying, and passing of the Healthy Workplace Bill. The reasoning behind many organizations not addressing workplace bullying was also overwhelmingly avoidance and denial.
P21 responded to the issue of the ways managers can deal with workplace bullying when both contractors and federal workers are present was the following: Government employees and contractors must be held to the same standards of conduct. Most importantly, government employees must be expected to respect and value contractors and when the WPB [policy] is violated against a contractor, sanctions must be handed out in a manner consistent if the target was a government employee.

P8 also concurs with this idea when she states, “Government employees and contractors should be held to the same standards and policies”.

The suggestion by the SMEs’ regarding necessary federal and state laws, especially enacting the Healthy Workplace Bill is seen in P18’s statement, “Passage of the anti-bullying legislation proposed by Prof [sic] David Yamada would be critical in helping to stop the issue from being so prevalent”. P3 also points out:

The state and federal laws that are on the books need to be implemented and enforced. Looking to what schools are mandated to do and adapting those requirements for the workplace would help. More importantly, employers and employees need to understand what the laws are and how to address violations in a constructive manner-again look at the military’s blunders and corrections made by mandate in dealing with sexual harassment, assault, and bullying for guidelines in what to do and what not to do.
Participants also frequently mentioned the reasoning behind the prevention of organizations addressing workplace bullying lies within avoidance and denial as seen in P1’s response:

1. Not knowing what WPB is. 2. Not believing that WPB is an actual phenomenon 3. Not knowing how to deal with WPB 4. Not wanting bad press or worrying about getting a bad reputation if outsiders find out that WPB [sic] at the organization 5. Fear of retribution from “higher ups” 6. Fear of <fill in the blank>.

P14 concurs in her statement:

Often, it is denial that workplace bullying exists. Organizations must realize that the same bullying we see every day on the news—to shame, ridicule, shun people who believe in certain politics—can be used in the workplace for any number of reasons. This is completely unacceptable. Bullying can be just as harmful to an individual as physical abuse. Workplace bullying, at its worst, is non-physical violence.

Current literature supports this conclusion as seen in the following research findings:

Main barriers to reporting bullying were the perception that nothing would change, not wanting to be seen as a trouble-maker, the seniority of the bully and uncertainty over how policies would be implemented and bullying cases managed. Data from qualitative interviews supported these findings.
and identified workload pressures and organisational [sic] culture as factors contributing to workplace bullying. (Carter, et al., 2013)

Confirmation from existing literature also exists in the following list from Blando, Ridenour, Hartley, and Casteel (2015) in their research findings:

Themes Identified as Barriers to Effective Implementation of WPV [Work Place Violence] Prevention Programs:

* Lack of action resulting from reporting
* Varying perceptions of what constitutes violence
* Bullying
  * Impact of money and profit driven management models
  * Lack of management accountability
  * Intense focus of healthcare organizations on customer service
  * Weak social service and law enforcement approaches to mentally ill patients. (para. 35)

Further findings for each sub-theme are illustrated in the following sections in Tables 17-19.

*Internal Steps.* Certain internal steps in organizations in the northern Alabama region should be taken to address workplace bullying considering the presence of a workforce consisting of both federal government and contracted employees. Responses of the SMEs were coded and the following issues emerged: team mentality/equal treatment; education/use best practices; create task force;
assess position/mission and vision alignment; and safe reporting processes. Table 17 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data.

Table 17. Findings addressing research Question Four--Theme: Internal steps needed by corporate organizations in north Alabama to effectively deal with workplace bullying. (Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Steps</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Mentality/Equal Treatment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>P-14: “Through team mentality. Both are on the same team, working for the same goal, and they are interdependent and need each other.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in Kotter’s (1995) step number two of his eight stage change process: “Forming a powerful guiding coalition. Assembling a group with enough power to lead the change effort. Encourage the group to work together as a team” (p. 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate/Use Best Practices</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P-6: “Educate contractors on the government rules; Educate military, civil servants, and contractors on the rules of engagement.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding in data Woodrow and Guest (2014) found the greater need of proper implementation of policies and procedures stating their findings “reveal that while the policy reflected best practice, implementation was uneven, resulting in persisting high levels of bullying which negatively affected staff well-being and performance” (p. 38).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Task Force</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>P-7: “Perhaps an anti-bullying task force composed of members from each organization, including at least representation</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding as seen in Kotter’s (1995) eighth step in his eight steps to change leadership: “Institutionalizing new approaches. Articulating the connections between the new</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from upper-level management from both orgs.” behaviors and corporate success. Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession” (p. 2).

| Assess Positions/ Mission and Vision Alignment | P-13: “Branding the organization as a Respectful Workplace and repeatedly providing a corporate statement that inappropriate behaviour [sic] and conduct will be challenged and responded to.” | The literature supports this finding in Kotter’s (1995) fifth step of the eight steps to change leadership: “5. Empowering others to act on the vision. Getting rid of obstacles to change. Changing systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision. Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions” (p.21) |
| Safe Reporting Process | P-15: “safe reporting process - tip line, anonymous reporting, publishment [sic] of investigation results” | The literature supports this finding when Graafland and Schouten’s (2012) work informs the reader “CSR can … improve the reputation within the consumer market, create a workforce that is happy to remain with them, and generate a positive attitude and good conduct among staff as well” (p. 379). |

*External Steps.* Certain external steps in organizations in the northern Alabama region should be taken to address workplace bullying, considering the presence of a workforce consisting of both federal government and contracted employees. Responses of the SMEs were coded and the following issues emerged: healthy workplace bill, convince law-makers, best practices, federal legal efforts,
consequences, and values defined. Table 18 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data.

Table 18. Findings addressing research Question Four--Theme: External steps needed by corporate organizations in north Alabama to effectively deal with workplace bullying. *(Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Steps</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Workplace Bill</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>P-7: “The Healthy Workplace Bill authored by David Yamada is a great place to start.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding within these researchers’ studies: It may be extremely hard to believe; however, there is no American law in existence against workplace bullying (Gumbus &amp; Meglich, 2012; Martin &amp; LaVan, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convince Law Makers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>P-5: “Our society is a re-active type of society and it will take allot [sic] to convince state and federal law makers to introduce and pass a law against bullying.”</td>
<td>Literature supports this finding as seen in the following statement: At the time of this research, “32 legislatures [30 states and 2 territories] have introduced the HWB” at the state government level, however, none have been ratified by the governing bodies and passed into law (Namie, Healthy Workplace Bill/State of the Union, 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P-13: “Not aware of what currently exists in the US. Five provinces in Canada have excellent Bullying and Harassment legislation.”</td>
<td>Literature supports this finding when we view the comments from Sanders et al. (2012), stating: Sweden, France, Italy, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Spain, Australia, Canada, and Norway all have legislation passed providing worker protection for the effects of workplace bullying (p. 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Federal Legal Efforts     | 8  | P-5: “The last presidential administration created a website to advocate against | The literature supports this finding as evidenced in Sanders et al., (2012) sentiment from their research stating: The caveat inserted by Yamada about the proposed legislation is that
bullying, the administration did not put forth the efforts to advocate for a federal law against bullying.”

in order to declare an abusive work environment the evidence and findings would require an act of omission as judged by the reasonable person standard. Also, if the act did not result in adverse employment action, this may relieve the employer of any responsibility. This is designed to negate frivolous suits that would surely inundate the judicial system (p. 13).

Consequences 6  
P-21: “Making workplace bullying illegal with substantial sanctions to the perpetrator and the organization that doesn't prevent it.”

The literature supports this finding as seen in comments by Sanders et al., (2012) stating, the key to the deployment of the HWB is the existence of retaliation or an abusive work environment, each of these within the proposed bill would be employment practices that are unlawful and can be charged against the employer as well as the employee who commits the offenses” (p. 12).

Values Defined 2  
P-19: “We first need to identify a legal definition of bullying. Then we can hold employers accountable for addressing complaints of bullying.”

The literature supports this finding as seen in the following sentiment agreed upon by many researchers: At present, no universally agreed upon definition of workplace bullying exists, (Gumbus & Lyons, 2011; Pastorek, Contacos-Sawyer, & Thomas, 2015; Pilch & Turska, 2015; Saunders, Huynh, & Goodman-Delahunty, 2007; Yuen, 2005).

**Barriers to Change.** Issues exist that serve as barriers preventing an organization from addressing workplace bullying within the federal and contracting workforce in northern Alabama. Responses of the SMEs were coded and the
following issues emerged: avoidance/denial, bureaucracy, laws and regulations, highly productive (short term), and, blaming targets. Table 19 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions and literature to support or refute found data.

Table 19. Findings addressing research Question Four--Theme: Barriers preventing organizations in north Alabama effectively dealing with workplace bullying. (Note: “F” column denotes Frequency: The number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to Change</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SME Responses</th>
<th>Literature (Support or Refute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance/Denial</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>P-13: “Head in the sand mentality. If I can't see it then it doesn't exist.”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding as seen in the following: When a leader invests the time necessary for employees to genuinely gain buy-in to the change process and be given a voice to acknowledge their fears, this can have a powerful positive influence on the change initiative (Gavin &amp; Roberto, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>P-6: “Culture, fatigue, staff shortages, and power plays. As one researcher, has aptly put, &quot;Organizations ignore, encourage, and reward workplace bullying.&quot;</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding as seen in the following: When managers understand the stages of change and the importance of implementing each stage in its entirety, they can improve their chances of successful organizational change and head off errors in change management made daily by so many of our leaders; fewer errors can make the difference between success and failure (Kotter, 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws and Regulations</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>P-7: “lack of a law to prohibit workplace bullying. Laziness. Overwork of HR and management”.</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding as seen in Michael Weber’s (2014) statement when he postulates bullies are reinforced for their behavior because they are allowed to continually get their own way. When they are not held accountable or confronted, their behavior advantage outweighs any known disadvantages because they do not exist (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Productive (Short Term)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>P-2: “Fear of losing productivity of the task master bully. Not realizing that short term success is very short lived and the damage irreparable [sic].”</td>
<td>The literature supports this finding as seen in the following sentiment: According to Workplace Bullying Institute’s 2014 Survey, a majority of bullies are bosses (p. 10). When viewing the perpetrators within the bullying incidents, the vast prevalence are committed by a person who is a single rank higher than the target at a rate of 40%; followed by the second most prevalent in the rank of peer at 19% (p. 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming Targets</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P-3: “Denying that there is a problem, covering it up, blaming those who are targeted.”</td>
<td>Research supports this finding as seen in the statement: Targets lose their jobs at a much higher rate than perpetrators (82% vs. 18%). When bullies are men, regardless of the targets gender, the loss rate is equally high. However, when bullies are women, women targets lose their jobs 89% of the time. Notably, when a woman is the perpetrator, and the woman is also the target, women suffer the highest job loss rate of any gender pairing (Namie, Workplace Bullying Institute, 2014, p. 8).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sub-Questions.** The findings from research Sub-Question 1 and 2 were not supported or refuted within this study’s literature review as they are suggestions for implementation from the SMEs’ regarding the policies and procedures data referenced to the literature in the above tables. This study’s literature review was based on the history, enormity, and consequences of this issue. This ancillary data was worth noting however, because experts within the field have suggestions for the practitioner regarding instituting the education and training within the organization. This researcher suggests each of these sub-questions and participant responses will be excellent subject matter for future research.

**Research Sub-Question 1.** What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying within the north Alabama workplace?

Initial hand coding of all responses to question four was completed to serve as a comparative analysis and validity check for the final findings. Main themes and key results from the hand coding process were entered into the data analytic coding software, NVivo©. This software was then used to further delineate the frequency of the terms and phrases used within the SME narratives. Words and phrases were used to search within each participant’s response pertaining to research sub-question one. The resulting coding inquiries, or findings, are outlined below and sorted according to their frequency.

Three sub-themes emerged from the response data regarding research question sub-question one and they are: (a) communication, b) outcomes, and c)
defining organizational roles. Respondents reiterated leadership should consider communication as a key factor in leading to an anti-bullying workplace as illustrated in P7’s statement: “Letter from the CEO/upper management to all employees, plus reinforcement of the message from all managers in the organization. In your scenario [federal workers and contracted employees], signed by upper management from BOTH organizations”. P2 also concurs with this finding in his statement: “By communicating throughout the organization. An effective method is management by walking around and talk to [sic] employees in their areas of work”. P:21 reiterates the importance of communication from leaders in north Alabama within the workforce in her statement:

1. Set the example by treating employees with respect and dignity, and demonstrate that WPB will never be tolerated. 2. Use research data to communicate how WPB impacts organizations…especially in terms of dollars and cents. 3. The act of communicating the importance of the issue will demonstrate that the organization cares not only for its fiscal gains and losses, but for the people without whom the organization could not thrive.

Participants also held outcome accountability for leadership as another essential factor for a successful anti-bullying workplace in northern Alabama as seen in P1’s response: “Make it a part of the organization’s strategic plan. Each department makes this part of their department specific strategic plan contributing to the overall strategic plan.” P11 suggests: “All initiatives need to be measured
using baseline data followed by follow-up assessments, to gather the data and use it to make the necessary changes”. Outcome accountability was also important to P16 in his suggestion within his response to this question:

Perhaps through climate surveys and reassessing climate over time to determine improvements and areas needing continued improvement. Appropriate performance review and conversations with managers is needed to ensure continued attention of the issue by managers along with coaching to help managers continue to develop in this area.

SME’s referred to defining senior executive roles in great frequency within the responses, as referenced by P13’s statement:

Setting the standard. Developing the set of policies and procedures which define expectations for everyone. Developing a set of reporting procedures. Defining the investigative process. Not bully and harassment [sic] anyone [sic] Budget time and money for training and investigations. Develop internal expertise in managing informal resolutions and formal investigations.

P5 also defined supervisory roles within north Alabama in the following statement:

Supervisors need to recognize the importance of their role, must be knowledgeable, be willing to help and provide guidance and follow-up. They are the front-line supporter, enforcer, and key players to the success or failure of any program and policy. They should give equal energy to this
new policy no different to the level of energy given to other critical programs (Equal opportunity, discriminations, sexual harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.).

Human Resources roles were defined within the participant’s responses and P13’s statement is a clear summary of the overall set of responses when he states:

To act and promote themselves as the subject matter experts within the organization when it comes to workplace conduct issues. They should promote themselves constantly as being a resource for workers and supervisors who may feel out of their depth when knowing what to do next when dealing with a workplace conduct situation. They must be experts in informal resolutions as well as providing appropriate and professional investigative services should a complaint be a formal one where the appropriate response is to conduct an investigation. They should be aware of best practices elsewhere as well as the current and relevant legislation.

Current literature agrees with the SME’s responses regarding communication as a key component of workplace bullying governance as seen in the following results: “Educational workshops that enhanced awareness of lateral violence and improved assertive communication resulted in a better working environment, reduction in turnover and vacancy rates, and reduced incidence of lateral violence” (Ceravolo, Schwartz, Foltz-Ramos, & Castner, 2012, p. 599).
Current literature also supports the importance of outcome accountability in recent findings, as seen when researchers Glasø and Notelaers (2012) state within their study the documented results: “that both negative and positive emotions partly mediate the relationships between exposure to bullying and outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to leave the organization” (p. 373). Glasø and Notelaers (2012) go on to state, “The consequences of workplace bullying are severe, and the targets’ experienced emotions seem to be strongly connected to this problem” (p. 373).

Current researchers Cowan and Fox (2015) authored one study with parallel findings and concurs that organizational roles are critical for leadership to master, stating:

HRPs [Human Resource Professionals] play several important roles in bullying situations and they link these roles in a temporal and situational manner. They first play the role of first, a trust listener; second, an objective, neutral third-party investigator; third, a management advisor; and fourth, a mediator/trainer/coach. Throughout this role execution they also became an emotional laborer. This model was often in contention with the HRP’s perceptions of targets and senior management expectations in bullying situations. (p. 119)

Further findings from each sub-theme are illustrated in the following sections in Tables 20-22.
Communication. Responses of SMEs regarding the role leadership plays in communication regarding the issue of workplace bullying were coded and the following suggestions from participants emerged: positive culture; educate; all employees included; workplace bullying definition; model behavior; and contact and visit. Table 20 illustrates the consensus of SME participants.

Table 20. How Do Organizations Communicate the Importance of Workplace Bullying? *(Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Culture</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Employees Included</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPB Definition</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Behavior</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact and Visit</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes. Responses of SMEs regarding the role leadership plays in ensuring outcomes regarding the issue of workplace bullying were coded and the following suggestions emerged: monitor/track data; strategic plan; honest feedback; additional training; accountability; workplace bullying definition; and celebrate workplace relationships. Table 21 illustrates the consensus of SME participants.
Table 21. How Organizations Use and Rely on Outcomes. (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Track Data</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest Feedback</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Training</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPB Definition</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate workplace relationships</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defining Organizational Roles. Responses of SMEs regarding leaderships ability to define roles within the organization concerning the issue of workplace bullying were coded and the following suggestions emerged: role model/mirror behaviors; enforcer; communicate support; educated training; safe reporting; provide guidance; define concept; investigator; create policies and procedures; and track outcomes. Table 22 illustrates the consensus of SME participants.

Table 22. Roles within the Organization. (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Model/Mirror Behaviors</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcer</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate Support</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated Training</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Reporting</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Guidance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define Concept</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track Outcomes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Research Sub-Question 2.** How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?

Initial hand coding of all responses to sub-question two was completed to serve as a comparative analysis and validity check for the final findings. Main themes and key results from the hand coding process were entered into the data analytic coding software, NVivo©. This software was then used to further delineate the frequency of the terms and phrases used within the SME narratives. Words and phrases were used to search within each participant’s response pertaining to research sub-question two. The resulting coding inquiries, or findings, are outlined below and sorted according to their frequency. Three sub-themes emerging from the response data regarding research sub-question two are: (a) accountability; (b) confidentiality; (c) unbiased reporting; and, (d) compliance. Respondents reiterated management should consider accountability as a key factor in leading to an anti-bullying workplace as illustrated in P11’s statement, “Ensuring accountability involves building the behavior expected of management into their performance review, but to also build in the specific behaviors that demonstrate respect and positive regard need to be measured individually and using an assessment.”

Respondents reiterated that management should consider confidentiality as a key factor in leading to an anti-bullying workplace, as illustrated in P16’s statement:
Confidentiality cannot be universally assured, depending upon the nature of the bullying alleged. To the extent complains [sic] about bullying and requests [sic] assistance from the organization to address it, the organization must work closely with the target to prepare him/her for the process, be accessible if concerns of retaliation arise, and treat retaliatory actions as serious as the underlying alleged bullying. Employees should be assured that the process will be addressed in the most confidential manner possible with the understanding disclosure at some level may be necessary in order to meaningful [sic] address the matter. The extent of this confidentiality and what is possible or not should be fully understood by the target before proceeding.

Respondents reiterated management should consider unbiased reporting as a key factor in leading to an anti-bullying workplace, as illustrated in P7’s statement, “Completely confidential surveys assessing employee reports of bullying and perception of organizational tolerance of bullying over multiple years, from an outside survey organization. Confidential reporting mechanisms.” P13 suggests: “Have a confidential hotline to the executive. Have an anonymous reporting conduit to the very top of the organization.”

Participants also concurred that management should consider compliance as a key factor in leading to an anti-bullying workplace, as illustrated in P10’s statement:
Leadership, first and foremost, must model the behavior of respectful treatment of all employees. Given that status striving/concerns are a [sic] the root of much mistreatment, Leadership [sic] must make clear that evaluations/continued employment are contingent upon following the code of conduct. Leadership must also serve as educators for their workforce to explain the motives/deficits that lead workers to mistreat others and the deleterious consequences for all employees, targets and bystanders alike, when a workplace becomes ‘contaminated’.

Current literature supports these findings as seen when researcher Karatuna (2015) states in his study the harm that inaction or preconceived concepts on the part of management can do to the victim, and the organization, as stated below:

The next phase contains stigmatizing behaviour [sic] by colleagues and management like continual loud-voiced criticism, humiliating or assigning meaningless tasks, slandering, isolation, and threats of violence. Encountering these negative attitudes almost on a daily basis and for a very long time leads to the stigmatization of the target…[then] management interferes and misjudges the situation. Management generally stigmatizes the target for being the problematic one or refuses to accept responsibility for the mistreatment. Thus, in the final phase, the target is generally expelled from working life by being forced out either directly (dismissal) or indirectly (the target decides to leave the organization voluntarily). (p. 22)
Additional findings for each sub-theme are illustrated in the following sections in Tables 23-26.

**Accountability.** Responses of SMEs regarding the role of management ensuring accountability regarding workplace bullying were coded and the following suggestions emerged: treat employees equally; safe workplace; leadership accountability; and educate. Table 23 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions regarding how organizations ensure accountability.

Table 23. How do Organizations Ensure Accountability? *(Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensure Accountability</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treat Employees Equally</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Workplace</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Accountability</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Confidentiality.** Responses of SMEs regarding the role of management ensuring confidentiality regarding workplace bullying were coded and the following suggestions emerged: external reporting; compliance officer; human resources lead; cannot be assured; leadership involvement; and limit access to records. Table 24 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions regarding how organizations ensure confidentiality.
Table 24. How Do Organizations Ensure Confidentiality? (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensure Confidentiality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Reporting</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Officer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Lead</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot be Assured</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Involvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit Access to Records</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reporting. Responses of SMEs regarding the role of management ensuring appropriate reporting of workplace bullying issues were coded and the following suggestions emerged: collect and protect; confidential/anonymous; outside consultant; mirror best practices; training; and staff interviews. Table 25 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions regarding how organizations ensure reporting.

Table 25. How do Organizations Ensure Reporting? (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Reporting</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collect and Protect</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential Anonymous</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Consultant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror Best Practices</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Interviews</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compliance. Responses of SMEs regarding the role of management ensuring compliance of workplace bullying issues were coded and the following suggestions emerged: safe culture; model behavior; consequences; new programs;
training supervisors; workplace bullying defined, contact and communication; and annual review and assessments. Table 26 outlines the data extrapolated from SME interview questions regarding how organizations ensure compliance.

Table 26. How do Organizations Ensure Compliance? (Note: Frequency equals the number of times the emerging theme was mentioned within the responses of participants.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe Culture</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Behavior</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Consequences</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop New Programs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Supervisors</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPB Definition</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact and Communication</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and Assessments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Synthesis and Summary of Data**

Overall themes emerged from the SME participants and are delineated within the higher frequency data in the previous sections. Participants, being SMEs, trainers, authors, consultants, and researchers in the anti-bullying workplace efforts, generally agreed with much of the literature on the subject matter. Participants response data revealed the following topics are essential to adopt within the corporate workplace in north Alabama, for anti-bullying efforts to be successful:

1. Define workplace bullying, ensuring all stakeholders are fully aware of its existence and what acts constitute bullying within the organization.
2. Create written policies in support of the anti-workplace bullying efforts within the organization, ensuring the policy is widely distributed.
3. Create written procedures for reporting, witnessing, and addressing workplace bullying, verify all stakeholders are aware of the new and updated reporting procedures, defining each employee’s role in processes.

4. Communicate all policies and procedures to all stakeholders on a regular basis and begin this communication during the onboarding process.

5. Educate and train all stakeholders on the zero-tolerance culture, on a regular, mandatory schedule, using various mediums of delivery, such as simulation, facilitation, and additional multi-media platforms to reiterate the in-person trainings.

6. Leadership should embrace change management regarding a zero-tolerance culture and champion publicly and often, the effort toward eliminating this issue within the workforce. Leadership should also consider adding anti-bullying advocacy to the company’s CSR platform.

7. Consequences should be widely communicated, upheld, and administered by the highest leadership levels regarding all bullying instances for the change in culture to be considered a priority within the organization.

8. Confidentiality must be safeguarded by the highest level of leadership and ensure everyone within the organization, and with whom they contract, are treated the same.
9. Outcomes regarding workplace bullying incidents (from both targets and witnesses), along with anti-bullying efforts, should be tracked and become an integral part of all leadership’s annual performance reviews.

This researcher has also concluded from both the SME participant responses and the change management theory, the issue of creating change within an organization, such as developing an anti-bullying workplace, is a process and should be viewed as a long-term commitment, not a single activity. The salient learning within this research developed as the responses from SMEs were coded into themes. The overriding coherent issue when addressing the issue of workplace bullying was that this type of work is an all-encompassing process and not a single event. This is one reason change management adaptation by leadership is a good fit to enhance effectiveness of implementing an anti-bullying workforce environment.

Contribution to Applied Practice

The practitioner action qualitative research method fostered the narrative interview process with SMEs’ responses streaming in over a month’s time-frame. The open-ended narrative questions allowed a thorough investigation into the four guiding research questions and the two research sub-questions. Capitalizing on the decades of combined SMEs years of research, writing, consulting, and advocating within this field, facilitated the findings in this research.

Maxwell (2013) states researchers should use up to five techniques to validate results within a practitioner qualitative action research study. This
researcher used each one to aid in the collection of information, along with the checks on validity as the data was received, categorized, and coded into meaningful findings. The use of these techniques within this research study are outlined below:

1. Reflexivity was used when communicating with the potential participants in clearly stating that this research is to aid in the reduction of an inherently negative act;

2. Rich data was retrieved from participants’ direct written responses to the questionnaire, along with verbatim transcripts from the voice interviews;

3. Respondent validation was gained in follow-up correspondence with participants and follow-up phone conversations, clarifying intent;

4. Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases was completed as the research assistant served as the secondary transcriber, and NVivo© software was then used for additional coding of data. The major advisor serving on this researcher’s committee also served as a third source of validity;

5. Triangulation was employed in the differing mediums of communication with the participants, through email, online questionnaire usage, and follow-up phone conversations. Participants were also diverse in: age; gender; professional areas of work;
educational accomplishments; and geographic locations, both within the U.S. and two additional countries, Australia and Canada.

The contribution to applied practice and the contributions to the practitioners are virtually the same within these results. Considering the practitioner within the field were the participants, accessing this collective information from their experiences in the field, may enhance their overall ability to further their work with the new-found consensus. Practitioners, working daily within this field, can access the study and retrieve an overarching view of SME contributions to enhance their daily work.

Leadership within corporations in north Alabama and elsewhere, can also apply the findings within their respective organizations and see the effect change leadership and anti-bullying policies and procedures have on the overall culture of the organization. It is important to remember this research stated positive results will require leadership as the champion within the organization, actions to back up the policies and procedures, regular awareness training, and time for the employees to “buy-in”.

It is this researcher’s conclusion that when these protocols are applied effectively within an organization, fiscal benefits show great promise. The culture has the possibility to change for the better, internal staffing and health costs may decrease, and the goodwill associated with the organization may also be improved.
Chapter Summary

Chapter four restated the research questions and delineated key themes and the overall research design compatibility. It also outlined the participants’ demographics in detail, along with the answers to background interview questions of the SMEs. The findings were addressed, linked to current literature on the topic, and listed in order of frequency. The synthesis, summary, and contributions to applied science constituted the final portion of the chapter. Chapter five begins with an overview of the research project and discusses the implications of the research. It also outlines the contribution of the study and ends with recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This chapter consists of a restatement of the problem summarizing the major themes, followed by the contribution of this study, relating it to the research questions and the theoretical framework, change leadership. A discussion regarding final researcher conclusions and implications for future research are disclosed in the final portion of this chapter and complete the overall research project.

This practitioner’s qualitative action research study sought to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific region of north Alabama. Emphasis was given to organizations whose workforce was mixed and consisted of federal government employees as well as contracted staffers.

The literature review informed the audience of the varying definitions of workplace bullying and the need for a more widely agreed upon version. The next focus was on the theoretical framework of change leadership within an organization. The study discussed prevailing thoughts in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the high value of organizational culture. Profiles of both bullies and targets were reviewed and the statistical data regarding bullying instances and witnesses to such were also revealed. Workplace bullying rates regarding gender and ethnicity were highlighted, along with the devastating impacts related to both the individual staff members and organization overall.
Fiscal impacts were also reported and showed an enormity in costs to the American labor force. The study also reiterated that now, though many state legislative bodies have introduced legislation within their state, as of this publishing, no state or federal statutes have been passed addressing workplace bullying in the U.S.

**Contribution of the Study**

Based on a transformative worldview and change leadership theory, this practitioner action research study enhanced the relevant body of knowledge in its ability to uniquely consolidate the viewpoints of 21 SMEs regarding workplace bullying within the framework of their responses to the research and interview questions posed.

Findings from this study were parallel in nature to the research questions guiding this study. The responses to the four main questions and the two follow-up questions, covered multiple sub-topics, as seen in the tables presented in Chapter Four. Considering participants were all experts within the workplace bullying field, their answers were consistently in alignment with the prevailing literature. This was not unexpected, as SME participants currently advocate, study, consult, publish, and teach based on current literature on the topic.

The findings of this study relate to the theoretical framework of change theory, in that most participant inputs strategically aligned with Kotter’s (1995) eight-stage process of leading with change theory. The link between Kotter’s
“Eight-Stage Process of Creating Major Change” is adjacent to participants’ responses in Table 27 below. (p. 21)

Table 27. Participant Responses Linked to Change Management’s Theoretical Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kotter’s 8 Stages</th>
<th>SME Responses (P = Participant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establishing a sense of urgency</td>
<td>P-8: “Productivity, profitability and reputation are all improved when an employer creates a positive workplace climate. Employees want to work at a place that is positive, productive and where people are treated humanely.” Impacts of bullying are “emotional distress, physical ailments (e.g. sleeplessness, anxiety, stress), psychological damage that is long term, damage to self-confidence.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examining the market and competitive realities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities</td>
<td>P-9: Addressing bullying is important to the employer due to “financial impact, attraction and retention of talent. Internal and external employer brand.” Negative impacts include “short and long term psychological impact, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. Negative impact on company culture.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>P-17: Impacts of workplace bullying include “to the person—stress, anxiety, depression, time off work; to the organization [sic]---toxic workplace.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Creating the guiding coalition</td>
<td>P-3: “…they [leadership] must walk the talk and talk the walk around the issue of workplace bullying by modeling ways that people in leadership positions can work with personnel in a way that reflects the values and mores [sic] clearly articulated in their mission statement.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting the group to work together like a team</td>
<td>P-10: “An environment of mutual respect should be explicitly cultivated with a leadership supported and collectively agreed upon system of norms of civil conduct that apply to both contracted and government employees.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Developing a vision and strategy</td>
<td>P-21: “There must be buy-in from every corner of the organization. It will be required that leadership sets a good example for how coworkers are expected to treat each other, and respond quickly and sensitively to reports made my targets.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creating a vision to help direct the change effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developing strategies for achieving that effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-1: “Guidelines versus policies should be implemented in an organization that adhere to the mission, vision, and values of an organization.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-10: “Policies should either be ‘home grown’ through a collective process or, if this is not possible, each employee must personally and publicly agree to endorse an in-place conduct code and/or agree that following the conduct code is a requirement for continued employment. This should be enforced.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-18: “Human Resources should protect the organization and its mission from bullies, especially bullying supervisors. This is a change for HR, which is accustomed to defending managers. That does not help the mission.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Communicating the change vision</th>
<th>P-2: “…communicating throughout the organization. An effective method is management by walking around and talk [sic] to the employees in their areas of work. No boundaries.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having the guiding coalition role model the behavior expected of employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-11: Human resources role …”is to model appropriate behavior, work to initiate the anti-bullying initiative, work with a consultant to design and develop and [sic] valid and reliable assessment instrument, train supervisors (that is assuming HR know [sic] about it themselves [sic].”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-19: “Eliminating bullying requires leadership commitment, ongoing education and training, and employee involvement. It’s not easy but worth it!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Empowering broad-based action</th>
<th>P-6: “Leadership needs to have education and the ability to comply with policies and procedures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- Getting rid of obstacles
- Changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision
- Encouraging risk-taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

| 6. Generating short-term wins | Social norms that may be seen as bullying need to be recognized as such and stopped. Frequent contact with staff and a truly open door policy is important.”

P-15: Basic procedures that should be implemented to ensure active practices would be “voluntary involvement by both staff organizations [contractors and federal workers], formalized posting of events initiated by contractor company...”.

P-16: “Policies should also afford diversionary practices, such as counseling and mediation, so that appropriate referrals can be made rather than strictly relying on punitive approaches.”

| 7. Consolidating gains and producing more change | P-13: Continued successful outcomes can be seen by “celebrating workplace relationships…always maintaining a focus on the importance of great workplace connections. Focus on the positive and they won’t have to spend so much time on the negative.”

P-14: The best way for the two workforces of contractors and federal employees to manage the bullying issue is “through team mentality. Both are on the same team, working for the same goal, and they are interdependent and need each other. The projects cannot get done without both groups doing their jobs. Seeing each other as a valued member of a team, rather than as an adversary, is key.”

P-21: “This culture/mindset would also encourage leaders to recognize and praise their employees when working well together, being kind, intervening on behalf of a target, etc. Focusing on positive behaviors and a non-violent environment can go a long way to move the culture in a good direction.”

|  | P-7: Leadership ensures accountability “by quickly addressing complaints, clear distribution of roles
| **Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that don’t fit together and don’t fit the transformation vision** | within the reporting structure, and clearly communicated consequences for those who know about harassment and do nothing, who violate confidentiality during the investigation process, or who retaliate against those who report harassment.”

P-11: “…all employees need to be trained in the aspects of bullying, communication skills, how to document, their rights, what the organization’s policy dictates. If senior leadership is not on top of this and does not champion the initiative, it will not succeed. It is a matter of a culture change, in many circumstances, which may require a whole culture change initiative.”

P-20: “After the initial employees have been in training and have signed a paper understanding the policy, all new employees should be a part of the training prior to starting a job with the corporation.”

| **Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision** | **Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents** |

8. *Anchoring new approaches in the culture*

| **Creating better performance through customer and productivity-oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective management** | P-4: Senior executives are “responsible for ensuring training occurs using most up to date information and training materials. They should understand the financial and legal risks to the organization if bullying is not properly investigated and disciplinary actions are not consistent [sic].”

P-5: The type of education/training suggested is “yearly recurring training, a topic of discussion during initial & recurring feedback and evaluated during annual appraisal. Invite guess [sic] speakers, give out posters and inexpensive promotional gift items (pens, sticky pads, letter opener, etc.) that can serve as friendly reminders.”

P-12: “HR are good with policies and procedures, [sic] it is important to assure [the organization] has a clear written policy about unwanted and unproductive behavior at work and that this type of behaviour [sic] is incongruent with the company culture and mission.” | **Articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success** |

| **Developing means to ensure leadership development and succession** | **P-4:** Senior executives are “responsible for ensuring training occurs using most up to date information and training materials. They should understand the financial and legal risks to the organization if bullying is not properly investigated and disciplinary actions are not consistent [sic].”

P-5: The type of education/training suggested is “yearly recurring training, a topic of discussion during initial & recurring feedback and evaluated during annual appraisal. Invite guess [sic] speakers, give out posters and inexpensive promotional gift items (pens, sticky pads, letter opener, etc.) that can serve as friendly reminders.”

P-12: “HR are good with policies and procedures, [sic] it is important to assure [the organization] has a clear written policy about unwanted and unproductive behavior at work and that this type of behavior [sic] is incongruent with the company culture and mission.” |
The findings within this study differ from other findings and literature surveyed in that this study consolidated information from a body of experts on workplace bullying located in physically diverse areas of the United States, Canada, and Australia. To this researcher’s knowledge, this study is unique in that it sought answers from field experts in the area of workplace bullying. Using SMEs as the participant pool, this researcher defined specific questions SMEs could expound upon to aid in the progress of the overall effort toward addressing this issue. After countless reviews of prevailing literature, this research may also be the first of its kind to link change management to the prevalent issue of bullying in the diverse workplace, as seen in north Alabama. The workplace environment and effectiveness of organizational leadership may be heavily influenced and encouraged by the findings of the coded data.

**Discussion and Implications**

The entirety of this participant action research project was predicated on the fact that this researcher had a known bias against bullying in the workplace. The researcher also confirms her bias, in that she believes in the existence of workplace bullying and has herself been a target in the past and has also been a witness to others being targeted.

This researcher has gained much knowledge from the interview responses of SMEs, the hand coding process, and using NVivo© for final coding of all participant inputs. Knowledge gained was that one potentially effective way to
address this issue within the workplace is to fully enact change management, and specifically to realize it is a process involving time, energy, and resources, and not merely a single event. The research has shown culture change within an organization takes a true change agent, generally the lead executive, to enact real, lasting transformation of the workforce to a zero-tolerance mind-set (Kotter, 1995).

Addressing workplace bullying within an organization, whether a perceived issue at present or not, is extremely important to the overall mission, vision, and bottom line of an organization (Fox & Cowan, 2015; Ritzman, 2016). Barriers often exist within an organization, such as ignorance, arrogance, or preconceived ideas, preventing this issue from being recognized and effectively resolved. Leadership and supervisory management shape organizational morale and culture (Torok et al., 2016). All organizational roles must be openly defined and clearly understood by all parties to promote an explicit zero-tolerance policy regarding workplace bullying (Reknes, Einarsen, Knardahl, & Lau, 2014). Openly addressing and defining this issue within the organization may be key in providing the workforce a safe and productive environment (Cowan & Fox, 2015).

Literature illustrates the negative effects bullying can have on fiscal constraints with additional costs incurred due to sick days, time off from work, increased turnover, cost of legal proceedings, a rise in medical needs of employees, and time spent by supervisors dealing with complaints and counseling unsatisfied workers (Chan-Mok, 2014; Hunter, 2014; Jenkins et al., 2011; Longton, 2014;
McDonald et al., 2015; Namie, 2014). According to Keashly and Newman (2008), “Victims of bullying indicate that they experience negative effects on their emotional and physical health, feel more dissatisfied, more fearful, more stressed, less committed to institution, and report being more likely to transfer to another unit or leave the [organization]” (p. 3).

Upon reviewing the facts and statistics regarding workplace bullying from current literature, this researcher finds the data quite staggering. The issue has only been named and studied since 1988, and is thus a relatively newly defined phenomenon (Namie, 2016), though one can surmise it has been in existence for longer. Many labels refer to this phenomenon, such as psychosocial harassment, interpersonal mistreatment, abusive conduct, psychological aggression, anti-social employee behavior, mobbing, and escalated incivility, just to name a few (Sanders et al., 2012). The Workplace Bullying Institute’s founder, Gary Namie, finds within his 2014 WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey (2014) that 72% of the American workforce has either been a target of bullying at work, or a witness to it (p. 3). This equates to a staggering 65 million workers in the U.S. who were affected annually (p. 5).

Bullies often are rewarded for their behavior, as many traits that make a productive leader are also exhibited by workplace bullies (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). Often bullies serve in a managerial role over others and may been seen as high performers with the outcomes of their work being rewarded on a regular basis,
and virtually no knowledge of the way in which the work was accomplished (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Considering the vast majority of bullies are bosses and 40% of reported incidences are committed by individuals a single rank higher than the target, this issue must be addressed by leadership within the organization for any lasting changes to take hold (Namie, 2014).

Professionals are leaving their workplace at a rate of two million a year due to the public perception of employees being treated unfairly, with an estimated cost to the U.S. economy of $64 billion a year (Olive & Cangemi, 2015). According to the research of Aleassa and Megdadi (2014), litigating a single case of workplace bullying can cost an organization from $30,000 to $100,000 annually (p. 158). Considering targets lose their jobs at a staggering rate compared to the perpetrators (18% job loss of perpetrators vs 82% of the targets), in effect, management has literally been rewarding bullying behaviors and punishing targets on a grand scale in the U.S. (Shallcross et al., 2013).

Change must begin from the top down and executives within the organization must serve as the champions of the anti-bullying efforts (Gilbert et al., 2013). Policies and procedures must be put into place and effectively administered with confidentiality and accountability at all levels of the organization (Kotter, 1995). Communication is the key to the success of this effort, as buy-in from all concerned takes time, energy and resources (Marshall, 2000; Takaki et al., 2013) Corporate leadership and written policies and procedures must be reinforced
consistently by perceived fair actions. Change within an organization is a process and not one event (Kotter, 1995). Change management is one way to successfully implement an anti-bullying effort within the workplace.

Currently, no law exits within the United States explicitly making workplace bullying an illegal act (Bailey, 2014; Gumbus & Meglich, 2012; Martin & LaVan, 2010; Richardson, Joiner, & Hall, 2016). Sweden, France, Italy, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Spain, Australia, Canada, and Norway all have active legislation providing worker protection for the effects of workplace bullying (Sanders et al., 2012). The United States is trailing behind these foreign governments in recognizing workplace bullying as a prominent issue within America’s work environment (Sanders et al., 2012). Advocating for anti-bullying statutes or laws may be one way for corporations to address this issue and create a safer, more productive environment for the American workforce (McDonald et al., 2012). The perception by employees and contracted staff, as well as all stakeholders, may be that enacting Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, within the organization as a platform for anti-bullying legislation, would strengthen the goodwill associated with that corporate body. As of this publication, the United States is one of the last remaining developed countries that has yet to legally protect its workforce from bullying.
Recommendations

The use of change management theory as the mechanism to implement anti-bullying policies and procedures within an organization was supported within the SME responses to the research questions, as seen in Chapter Four. Numerous participants stated the importance in having written policies, procedures, and repetitive education of the workforce regarding the zero-tolerance policy, along with renewed educational opportunities during the onboarding process. SMEs also frequently repeated the desperate need to have a definitive definition of workplace bullying, whether organization-wide or nationwide, to effectively address this issue in the workplace. Respondents also agreed this change effort must be championed by the leadership of the organization, modeled and reinforced continuously by upper management and supervisors.

SME participants stated consequences must be strictly enforced for the workforce to begin to understand the gravity of the situation and change the overall culture into a safe, positive, and supportive environment for all. Samnani (2013) found similar results in his research regarding the role of culture and workplace bullying incidents within an organization (p. 1). Outcomes regarding workplace bullying incidents and anti-bullying initiatives should also be measured, with annual outcome reporting, and executives of the organization held accountable for the results in their annual reviews.
SMEs concurred within their collective responses that the following actions and policies must be enacted within an organization, whether in the north Alabama region, or elsewhere, for a successful anti-bullying effort to gain momentum within an organization:

1. A written, published, highly visible, zero-tolerance anti-bullying policy must be created, defining workplace bullying to all stakeholders (Pastorek, Contacos-Sawyer, & Thomas, 2015).

2. The zero-tolerance policy should be readily available to the public, and placed prominently on the public website, as well as any intra-net sites within the organization. This act would become part of the organization’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy as perceived by the public, current, and potential employees (Popa & Salanta, 2014).

3. Training regarding bullying in the workplace should be mandatory and offered within the on-boarding process and added as an essential portion to each employee’s annual review process. Managers, supervisors, and executives should also have outcomes associated with workplace bullying tied to their ratings in his/her annual performance review. Mandatory training of all staff should be held at least annually (Meglich-Sespico, Faley, & Knapp, 2007).
4. Safe, written, clearly delineated reporting procedures should be in place within an organization, fostering the premise that all stakeholders are encouraged to report workplace bullying incidences, whether as a witness to or a target of bullying (Dumay & Marini, 2012; Meglich-Sespico, 2007).

5. Senior executives must publicly and consistently address to the full staff his/her support of the zero-tolerance anti-bullying workplace policy (Karatuna, 2015).

Additional actions to enhance the ability in generating successful outcomes and creating an anti-bullying culture within an organization were suggested by the participant SMEs and are as follows:

1. Senior executives should personally attend all employee training on the issue to reiterate the importance throughout the organization.

2. Outside experts should be brought in regularly to aid in additional training/awareness issues.

3. Role-playing with individuals re-enacting bullying acts and exemplifying through skits how to effectively deal with such acts is also encouraged.

4. An outside mediator should be brought in to emphasize anonymity and a judgment-free workplace (Cicerali & Cicerali, 2016).
5. Provide counseling/training to all personnel regarding inter-personal relationship building, trust building, and effective communication techniques (Bernstein & Trimm, 2016; Howard, Johnston, Wech, & Stout, 2015).

6. Adopt a culture change initiative within all strategic plans and develop outcomes to measure the effectiveness on an annual basis (Kotter, 1995; Meglich-Sespico et al., 2007).

7. Create a hot-line or private messaging account, linked directly and confidentially, to the CEO for any stakeholder to use regarding workplace bullying instances.

8. Champion this topic publicly and support efforts to enact laws/statutes to protect the workforce from this prominent issue (Stojanova, 2014).

9. Create a budget line-item providing fiscal support through training, awareness campaigns, advocacy, and counseling efforts regarding a bully-free workplace.

Results of the research study are defined in Kirk’s Anti-Workplace Bullying Model for an organization consisting of federal government and contracting employees in Figure 7 below. This model can also be adopted by other organizations to aid in the creation of a zero-tolerance culture regarding workplace bullying.
Figure 7. Kirk’s Anti-Workplace Bullying Model

1. Create Zero-Tolerance Anti-Bullying Policy
   a. Define workplace bullying acts and consequences within your organization.
   b. Add the written policy to the annual strategic plan, with concrete outcomes.
   c. Add policy awareness to the onboarding process and gain signatures on the specific policy upon initial hire then annually during employment.

2. Define Reporting Procedures
   a. Define explicit reporting procedures (who/what/when/where), to maintain confidentiality when possible.
   b. Provide outside mediator when possible to maintain anonymity for both the target and the perpetrator.
   c. Ensure senior executive is made aware of all reported incidences.

3. Schedule Mandatory Training
   a. Train employees on the definition of workplace bullying acts within your organization.
   b. Vary training methods and mediums used (skits, videos, role playing, Q&A sessions, etc.).
   c. Add sessions on interpersonal relationship building, personality profiles, and tolerance.

4. Create Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative
   a. Champion anti-workplace bullying publicly to all stakeholders.
   b. Support anti-bullying statutes and laws on the local, state, and federal level.
   c. Create an ongoing budget line-item for fiscal support of anti-workplace bullying initiatives, such as: internal/external awareness campaigns, counseling, training, consultants, etc.).

5. Lead Effort with Senior Executives
   a. Leading the anti-workplace bullying initiative should be a priority for all senior executives and workplace bullying outcomes should be added to his/her annual review.
   b. Top executives should show all employees this initiative, or culture shift, is fully supported by their presence in training sessions and through interactions with all staff.
   c. Create bullying hot-line or private messaging account to contact the senior executive.

6. Review and Adapt Policies and Procedures
   a. Review the anti-bullying policy on an annual basis.
   b. Adapt any revisions as necessary to achieve favorable outcomes for the employees.
   c. Communicate all updates and changes of the policy to all stakeholders.
Recommendations for Future Research

One recommendation for future research would be to conduct a workplace bullying comparative analysis within a single corporation comprised of multiple locations both in the United States and in other countries where legislation is in place to make workplace bullying an illegal act. Anonymity for the corporation would be paramount, along with the confidentiality of the participants. The hypothesis may be a perceived lower incidence rate of workplace bullying in countries where it is an illegal action.

Another recommendation for future research would be to develop an action research project by gaining confidential access to a federal government contracting organization with a global presence and conducting a narrative interview process with the participants who have worked both within a federally-contracted organization and also within the civilian workforce during his/her career. The comparison of each participant’s perception of the rate of workplace bullying within each differing organization might have telling results. One hypothesis could be perceptions would tend to show higher bullying incidences within the government contracting organization versus the civilian workforce.

Another recommendation for future research would be the creation of an interactive webinar to be used by individual organizations in the United States that offered a pre-and-post survey to gain valuable insights into the perceived definition and recognizability of workplace bullying acts. The researcher could ask initial
questions regarding the participant’s understanding of workplace bullying to achieve individual and company-wide base-line data. Then, the participant could interact with the webinar (*anonymously*) and watch a number of video clips of differing workplace interactions and be instructed to determine whether each viewed interaction was a bullying act or not in his/her opinion. The results company-wide would enable an organization to gain insight into whether or not employees of the organization overall have a true understanding of workplace bullying acts. This data could then guide future educational and awareness efforts within the organization.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter five discussed the contribution of this research study, discussion and implications, along with recommendation for future research. Findings of this study have the propensity to enable leaders within the north Alabama region to successfully adopt an anti-bullying workforce policy. This researcher found great parallels between the SMEs responses to the research questions, and the use of change leadership theory to enhance the probability of a successful anti-bullying workplace initiative.
References


http://www.aicpa.org/InterestAreas/ForensicAndValuation/Membership/DownloadableDocuments/Intl%20Glossary%20of%20BV%20Terms.pdf


Caldwell, A. (2016). *Bullying: Real and lasting ways to stop bullies, stand up for yourself & overcome fear (depression, bullying in school, school violence, parenting, workplace bullying, harassment)*. Seattle: Amazon Digital Services LLC.


Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County. (2016, March 8). 2015 Madison County Overview/Community Data. Retrieved from Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County:


Veterinary Team Brief. (2014). Blueprint: Anti-Bullying workplace policy. *Veterinary Team Brief, 7.*


Appendix A

National Institutes of Health Certification

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Wendy Kirk successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 07/02/2018.

Certification Number: 2099100.
Appendix B

Letter of Introduction/Participant Recruitment Email

Subject Line: Subject Matter Expert Research Study Request RE: Workplace Bullying

Dear Subject Matter Expert:

As a well-known Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the field, it is my honor to invite your participation in a doctoral research study regarding workplace bullying.

I am a Doctoral Candidate at the Huntsville, Alabama campus of Florida Institute of Technology, in the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) Program. The title of my Dissertation is: Workplace Bullying: Proven Methodologies to Mitigate the Issue Within the Government Contracting Workplace Environment.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific region of north Alabama. Emphasis will be given to organizations whose workforce is mixed, consisting of federal government employees working side-by-side with civilian contracted staffers, often leading to a dynamic rife with a natural bullying hierarchy.

It is my hope that, with your insight and input, an anti-bullying model for success can be created for implementation in our contracting facilities within the northern Alabama region to help eradicate this issue for our workplaces, one organization at a time.

Your participation for the success of this research is vital and the results of the project truly depend upon your input and insights, due to your extensive knowledge base, history with the subject matter, and expertise. I am excited to hear from you and hope you are willing and able to share approximately 45 minutes of your time and knowledge with me in answering 6 research questions.

If you wish to participate, please sign and return the attached Consent Form to me via email at workplacebullyingsurvey@gmail.com and the link to the research study interview questionnaire will be sent to you immediately. (Your signature is needed on the bottom of page 2.)

The time frame for my research responses is a short 3 weeks. As a DBA Candidate, I am extremely grateful for your consideration and hope to hear from you soon. It is my sincere desire to be included in your numbers as a subject matter expert in the decades to come, working alongside each of you, to eradicate workplace bullying from our organizations in the United States.

Thank you for the work you have done, are doing, and have yet to do, to eliminate this issue in our workplaces.

Sincerely,
Wendy J. Kirk

No compensation will be offered or received by any participants for their responses. Participants of the study will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choosing with no consequences.
Appendix C

Consent Form

Florida Institute of Technology

Informed Consent

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study. The researcher will answer any questions before you sign this form.

Study Title: WORKPLACE BULLYING: PROVEN METHODOLOGIES TO MITIGATE THE ISSUE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this qualitative study is to ascertain proven methods to adopt within the workplace to mediate workplace bullying in organizations in a specific region of north Alabama, with emphasis given to organizations whose workforce is mixed and consists of government employees as well as civilian contracted staffers. This study aims to consolidate knowledge from academic research experts (subject matter experts) in the field of workplace bullying, and outline concrete steps and implementable plans for area corporate leadership to implement within the various levels of management in the government contracting environment in the specific geographic region studied. Participants were chosen for their inherent knowledge and status as subject matter experts (SMEs) in the field of workplace bullying.

Procedures: This qualitative study will have an approximate 10-week time frame for completion and SME’s will have the option of two sources of data delivery: SurveyMonkey® and follow-up telephone interviews, at the time chosen by the SME participants. The survey will ask for answers to the six research questions posed by the researcher and should take approximately 45 minutes.

Potential Risks of Participating: This practitioners action qualitative research study proposes a minimal level of risk to participants on the IRB application and anticipates no level of harm or discomfort will be felt by participants of the study. Minimal risk as defined by NIH in the Common Rule is “the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests” (National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research, 2008, p. 64).


Potential Benefits of Participating: Opportunities anticipated of the outcomes of the research are to make a significant contribution to the Northern Alabama regional workforce in the reduction of the incidents of workplace bullying. Additional opportunities may also be seen in a more global reach of influence as many of the contracting corporations represented in this area may be able to replicate the models and policies in other geographic locations across the globe.

Potential directions for future continuous improvement as an outcome of the research are items such as: a) pre-and-post questionnaires of local workforce satisfaction regarding workforce bullying acts; b) continuous community-level dialogue regarding workplace bullying—(local

193
radio/TV/spots regularly covering workplace bullying issues); c) educational workshops for managers and leadership; d) social media campaigns regarding anti-workplace bullying initiatives; e) local workplace bullying hotline created for targets to call for help/advice; f) all local corporations begin to have active codes of conduct/ethics covering bullying in the workplace; g) all local corporations host regular mandatory training regarding anti-workplace bullying; and h) all local corporations have zero-tolerance policies in place regarding workplace bullying.

As stated within the body of the literature review, a single case of workplace bullying can cost a corporation as much as $100,000 and the human cost can be as high as a human life in the most extreme cases of a suicidal outcome. Each worker in the U.S. should care deeply about this issue as one-quarter of the workforce is affected on an annual basis by this prolific issue and it is something that corporate management has the power to eradicate from the workplace.

**Compensation:** No compensation will be offered or received by any participants for their responses.

**Confidentiality:** The identity of all participants will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Participant’s information will be assigned a unique identifier (code number), instead of any personally identifiable information. The list connecting a participant’s name to this unique identifier will remain in a locked file in the researcher’s personal office with only the researcher having access to the file. When the study is completed and the data has been analyzed, the list will be destroyed within a twelve-month time frame. Individual names of participants will not be used in any report gleaned from this study or any future studies.

Any and all audio recordings of interviews of participants (for those choosing the audio recording version of participation versus the written questionnaire) will be destroyed after the transcriptions of the recordings are made and double-checked for accuracy. No storage (long term) will be made of any audio files of participants. Until transcription, the audio files of the interviews will remain on an independent drive used solely for the purpose of this research study and kept under lock and key in a filing cabinet in the researcher’s personal office. No recordings of participants will remain (long term) on the researcher’s computer, but will transferred rapidly to the exterior storage drive for safe keeping until transcription. The audio files of the participant’s interviews will be deleted once a verification is made that the files have been successfully saved to the exterior independent drive. A backup audio file will be made of each interview, on an external digital recording device, also to be kept in the locked filing cabinet, in the researcher’s office, until transcriptions are completed. These additional audio files will also be destroyed once transcriptions are created and verified for accuracy.

Only the researcher and the researcher’s assistant will have access to the actual recordings for the initial transcription by the researcher, and the secondary transcription verification by the assistant.

Data derived from this study may be used in future research. Confidentiality of the participants will be maintained in all subsequent reports.

**Voluntary participation:**
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You may also refuse to answer any of the questions asked of you.

**Right to withdraw from the study:**
You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.
Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Wendy J. Kirk, Principal Investigator
Home Address
Email
Phone

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

Dr. Lisa Steelman, IRB Chairperson
150 West University Blvd.
Melbourne, FL 32901
Email: lsteelema@fit.edu
Phone: 321.674.8104

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Principal Investigator: _Wendy J. Kirk__________ Date: __1-05-2017_____
Appendix D

Final Participant Email Thank You

Subject Line: Thank You for Participating

NAME (Subject Matter Expert):

It is once again my honor to extend to you heart-felt thanks for making this research study on workplace bullying a possibility. Your insight and input on the issue, as a well-known Subject Matter Expert, will continue to aid in the anti-workplace bullying efforts nationwide.

I am humbled by the work SMEs such as yourself have done toward eradicating this issue across the United States and thank you for your time and assistance toward this research effort as well.

Sincerely,

Wendy
Appendix E

SME Research Questions

Demographic and Background Data of Participant:

1. **Age:**
   - □ 20 – 30
   - □ 31 - 40
   - □ 41 - 50
   - □ 51 - 60
   - □ 61 - 70
   - □ 70 +

2. **Gender:**
   - □ Female
   - □ Male

3. **Highest Level of Education Achieved:**
   - □ High School Diploma
   - □ Associate’s Degree
   - □ Bachelor’s Degree
   - □ Master’s Degree
   - □ Post-Master’s Degree studies (Specialist, etc.)
   - □ Doctorate Degree
   - □ Multiple Doctorates
   - □ Other: ____________

4. **Years working/researching/teaching/advocating in the area of anti-workplace bullying:**
   - □ 1-5
   - □ 6-10
   - □ 11-15
   - □ 16-20
   - □ 20+

5. What prompted your interest/work/advocacy in the workplace bullying field?

6. In your own words, please define workplace bullying:
Research Questions and Sub-Questions:

1. What are the impacts of workplace bullying to the federal and contracting workforce?

2. Why is addressing workplace bullying important to federal and contracting organizations?

3. What are the most important ways to address workplace bullying within governmental and contracting organizations?

4. What steps should corporate leaders in the northern Alabama workforce region, take to effectively lessen or eliminate the issue of workplace bullying?

Sub-Questions:

1. What role should leadership play in diminishing workplace bullying in the north Alabama workplace?

2. How do managers address workplace bullying in the north Alabama region?
Appendix F

Permission to Use Copyrighted Data and Figures

Gmail

permission granted
1 message

Gary Namie <wpb.institute@gmail.com>
To: wjkirk005@gmail.com
Fri, Mar 31, 2017 at 1:43 PM

Dear Wendy,

You have permission to cite research by WBI at any time.

Additionally, I grant you special permission to use WBI graphical depictions of the results of the 2014 WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey in your doctoral dissertation.

Good luck.

Respectfully,

Gary Namie, PhD, Director
Workplace Bullying Institute
WBI Services
Workplace Bullying University
320.256.6930