Bullying in the Nigerian Work Environment

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Abstract
Workplace bullying has attracted the attention of researchers in Europe, US, and elsewhere. It has therefore become necessary to examine the phenomenon in Nigeria, given the continuous enlightenment concerning the health of targets and the financial implications for organisations. Using qualitative data obtained from structured in-depth-interview of thirty employees randomly selected from public and private sector organisations in Nigeria, this study explores the nature of bullying in the Nigerian work environment. Considering the paucity of literature on the subject in Africa, this research contributes to knowledge on the nature of workplace bullying in Nigeria with a focus on the contexts of its occurrence. Findings reveal the prominence of bullying in the public sector with culture playing a significant part in its acceptability. Findings also reveal that bullying targets are not likely to report such behaviour because of the fear of retribution. Religion is therefore employed as a coping mechanism because jobs are scarce and social benefits do not exist to cushion the impact of unemployment. The impact on productivity is profound; disenchanted workforces that exhibit little or no ingenuity in the execution of their duties cannot function maximally. Unfortunately, diligent members of staff resign in frustration whilst a few develop psychosomatic symptoms in prolonged cases of bullying. To remain relevant and competitive in today's dynamic world of business, the managements of establishments in Nigeria need to be proactive in analysing the risk factors that facilitate organisational deviant behaviours in their work environments, and address them in order to create more productive work climates.

Introduction
The menace of workplace bullying has attracted significant attention in the modernised economies of the world resulting in decisive legislations being enacted to combat it. The first legislation against work place bullying, "Victimisation at work" (1993), was passed in Sweden, after Leymann (Workplace Bullying Institute, n.d.) a psychiatrist, established a correlation between work and trauma amongst clinical patients.

This study is necessitated by the subtle nature of workplace bullying, the resultant economic loss and the psychological trauma on targets as established by research over the years. In Australia, a 19-year-old waitress, Brodie Panlock, committed suicide in 2006 by jumping from a building after being the target of workplace bullying in the café where she worked for over one year (Australia, Parliament, 2012). Foxconn, a Taiwanese multinational electronics contract manufacturing company, drew negative publicity in 2010 when its employees began to commit suicides by jumping off the office complex's high-rise buildings. An expert in describing the incidents called it a case of "workplace violence turned inward*"* (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2010, Para. 7).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the foremost international agency in the establishment of universal standard work practices does not expressly mention workplace bullying under the declaration of fundamental principles and rights at work (1998). However, in 2003, a tripartite body of 36 experts from government, employers and workers of member countries convened to review a draft and develop a code of practice on what it termed "violence and stress at work in services: a threat to productivity and decent work" (ILO, 2003). The meeting established proactive guidelines which member countries could reproduce and adopt in measuring and tackling violence in their local establishments using Occupational Safety and Health Management systems. Under this code, ILO (2003) defined violence as, "any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of his or her work" (p. 4). The code emphasised the need for collation and assessment of national data from various stakeholders in different countries on identified cases of violence.

On her part, Nigeria has the Factory Act (1990) which safeguards employees from occupational hazards of a physical nature in factory-designated premises. The more recent Employee Compensation Act (2010) goes further to specify compensation due to employees physically disabled in the course of employment and to the families of those fatally injured. Compensation also exists for mental stress that may arise out of and in the course of an employee's employment.

Namie (2003) has argued that workplace bullying is three times more widespread compared to more recognised illegal acts such as sexual harassment, illegal discrimination and harassment but the fact that it is not illegal under the American labour statue makes it easy to ignore. Witheridge (WBI, 2009) therefore called for awareness to be generated on the effects of bullying in the workplace towards a legitimate challenge of the vice.

This research paper aims to:
1. investigate the prevalence of workplace bullying within the Nigerian work environment;
2. examine the factors that aid and abet the phenomenon; and
3. proffer solutions that would challenge the status quo of silence that seems to exist on the subject in the Nigerian workplace.

Review of Literature

Previous researchers have utilised existing management and social theories to address the bullying phenomenon. Some of the theories that have been used are Giddens' Structuration Theory, Hofstede's Cultural Dimension and the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) research programme. The spate of studies and resources expended in the research of workplace bullying in recent times strongly indicates that the subject, though a cross-cultural phenomenon, requires individual national initiatives to proffer practical solutions that take cognisance of the unique characteristics of each environment.

However, the term '*Workplace bullying',* is not universally adopted, as other terms such as *'harassment'* (The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, EU-OSHA, 2009)*, 'mobbing'* (Leymann, 1996) and *'violence'* (ILO, 2003) are also used to describe similar behaviours. Namie (2003) qualifies the buildup process that leads to bullying as '*Escalated incivility'.* Cade (End2end Business Solutions, n.d.) however made a clear distinction between harassment and workplace bullying, showing that harassment has a physical edge (touching, intrusion on personal space, damage to possessions) which workplace bullying does not have in that it is subtler and less recognisable. Other distinctions that have been made between the two terms follow legal parlance. For instance, the Irish Health Safety Authority has observed that;

In differentiating the two it is worth considering that harassment is governed by equality legislation and is predicated on the person being a member of one of the nine categories specified within the anti-harassment legislation. Bullying is legally distinct from harassment as bullying behaviour is not predicated on membership of any distinct group (Health Safety Authority, Ireland, 2007, p.5).

A major challenge towards addressing the issue of workplace bullying is the fact that there is no universal definition of the term. The different dimensions introduced by various researchers in defining the term have however assisted in gaining helpful insights into the phenomenon.

According to Adams (1994, p. 2) offensive behaviour through vindictive, cruel, malicious or humiliating attempts to undermine an individual or groups of employees. And these persistently negative attacks on their personal and professional performance are typically unpredictable, irrational and often unfair. This abuse of power or position can cause such chronic stress and anxiety that the employees gradually lose belief in themselves, suffering physical ill-health and mental distress as a result.

Bullying at work means harassing, offending or socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied, a particular activity, interaction or process has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position or becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal 'strength' are in conflict (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2011, p. 22).

Status-blind interpersonal hostility that is deliberate, repeated and sufficiently severe as to harm the targeted person's health or economic status. Further, it is driven by perpetrators' need to control another individual, often undermining legitimate business interests in the process (Namie, 2003, p.1-2).

A form of antisocial behaviour in the workplace that occurs as a result of unequal power between two individuals or a group of people and another individual and/or a group of people in

the workplace, which can cause distress, discomfort, physical and/ or psychological harm (Owoyemi 2011, p. 67).

Bullying behaviours are not spontaneous but calculated and premeditated, thus emphasising the role of intent in construing the term. The acceptability of intent within the definition of workplace bullying is nevertheless controversial because of the view that it provides an escape mechanism for perpetrators who might claim that their intention was not to bully. Einarsen Hoel, Zaph and Cooper (2011) noted that a conflict situation cannot be called bullying if the dissenting parties are of equal strength.

The duration an action needs to subsist for it to be termed bullying is another controversial issue. Einarsen Hoel, Zaph and Cooper (2011), Namie (2003) and Adams (1994) emphasise the frequency of the action whilst others like the Law Society's Employment Law Committee (2012) indicate the severity. "A single instance of "unreasonable behaviour" can constitute workplace bullying if sufficiently aggravated'' (p. 2). Deacon (2014) advocates the use of the word 'persistence' in defining workplace bullying because it helps to distinguish between reasonable and excessive use of negative behaviour. According to her, certain bullying behaviours are necessitated by managerial roles and have organisational uses when controlled. Board and Fritzon (2005) described traits of psychotic disorders observed in a United Kingdom study of senior male business managers and executives as 'necessary characteristics required at senior management levels to excel' (p.26). A distinction was however made between those emotional components (histrionic, narcissistic and compulsive) of psychotic disorders and the deviant lifestyle components (borderline, antisocial, paranoid and passive aggressive) found in the other two groups of men with disordered personality and mental illness.

Leymann (1996) argued that research was yet to and not likely to establish the importance of personality traits in bullying behaviour because the distinctive nature of organisations allowed the establishment and enforcement of behavioural rules. Recent studies by Harvey, Treadway, Heames and Duke (2009) suggest that childhood and interpersonal experiences might directly impact the behaviour of an individual relative to that of social or professional counterparts. The authors note that "the psychological makeup of an individual (i.e. genes and chemical balance) can have a direct effect on the behavioural patterns of an individual" (p.36). The EU-OSHA (2010), in its risk observatory report by member states, expressed the view that "individual or personality factors are not usually the cause of bullying but can in a certain organisation, circumstances, and context have a meaning" (p.11). Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007), in a random Norwegian survey of union workers and employee representatives, discovered that employees that had previous experiences of bullying either as children or in previous employments were more likely to become bullying perpetrators. Leymann (1996) argued that targets of long exposure to bullying behaviour developed marked behavioural traits as a result of trauma. Labelling them as difficult therefore creates wrongful stereotypes because those behaviours are not necessarily the ones they came into the organisation with but those they developed from within the organisation.

Three model theories have significantly influenced the understanding of organisational behaviour; cognitive theories, behavioural theories and social cognitive theory. The cognitive theory focuses on the perceptions that influence certain behaviours, adjudging them subjective rather than objective. The behavioural theorists explain organisational behaviour relative to stimulus and responses, arguing that every reaction is triggered by a preceding circumstance. On its own part, this research focuses on the social cognitive theory because it embraces cognitive, behavioural and contextual factors. In his 'triadic reciprocal causation model' Bandura (1989) stated that behaviour is the outcome of interactions of personal characteristics, behaviour and environmental factors. As such, 'people are both products and producers of their environment' (Bandura &Wood, 1989, p. 362). He went further to depict how these interactions play out, aiming to show how personality and behaviour are modified through expectations, beliefs, self-perception, goals and intentions. Societal influences help to develop expectation and personality, so also the manner in which society reacts to physical characteristics and socially conferred roles and statuses. Behaviour and environment co-depend. The behaviour influences the environment, which takes its attributes from the behaviour; conversely the environment influences the behaviour, which in turn takes its attributes from the environment.

Furthermore, Bandura (1998) identified factors that shape development over the life span of individuals. These are custom generated societal influence, biological conditions, irregular life events (such as divorce, accidents and career changes), physical environments (social, economic and technological changes) and fortuitous events. Innate appreciation of these factors, Bandura argued, helps in the preparation of skills and competencies that enable one to respond appropriately to situations and position oneself for opportunities. He further advocated provision of social support and resources in enabling individuals cope with the challenges of development. The social cognitive theory provides different dimensions through which the constructs that form bullying behaviour can be examined. It becomes imperative then to trace each construct to the dimension that created it as a basis for devising interventions.

Namie (2003) has argued that organisations become prone to bullying behaviour when results become an obsession. The competition generated, as well as the benefits and rewards are what Salin (2003) referred to as motivating structures for workplace bullying. The Washington State Department of Labour and Industries (2011) confirmed that organisations with unreasonable expectations from employees typically have corporate and institutional bullying entrenched in their corporate culture.

A significant number of researchers agree that interplay of factors within the organisation structure reinforce workplace bullying. Factors cited include poorly executed conflict management, socioeconomic and organisational changes, poor psychosocial work environment, deficiencies in work design, socially exposed position of the victim, low moral standards, organisational division into uniformed and non-uniformed staff, power relations, management style, conflict management style and witnessing bullying (Baillien, Bollen, Euwema & Hans De Witte, 2014; Einarsen & Hoel, 2001; Harvey etal., 2009; Leymann, 1996; Oghojafor, Muo &

Olufayo 2012; Owoyemi, 2011). There is a general consensus that workplace bullying impairs organisational capacity, has negative physical and psychological impact on targets and dire financial implications for the economy. It is very unlikely that a universal definition of workplace bullying would suffice or emerge given the peculiarities of nations and the cultural diversities. However, general consensus is needed as to the acceptability or otherwise of certain behaviours within the confines of a work environment to address an increasingly diversified workforce and an expanding business circumference across the globe.

Workplace Bullying in Nigeria
In introducing the concept of workplace bullying as a research topic amongst other organisational deviant behaviours in Nigeria, Owoyemi (2010) described it as 'an undiagnosed social problem' depicting the level of ignorance existing on the subject in Nigeria. The challenge with undiagnosed problems is that they eventually become endemic. Leymann (1996) established from clinical studies that when workplace bullying is incorrectly diagnosed, targets are labelled as difficult and unjustly expelled from organisations. Namie (2003) projected 70% likelihood that bullied targets would either voluntarily lose their jobs or be relieved of their duties. Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland and Einarsen (2014), in a more recent study, showed that exposure to workplace bullying could pose a threat to employees as it elevates their feelings of job insecurity.

Fajana, Owoyemi, Shadare, Elegbede and Gbajumo-Sheriff (2011), in their pioneer study on workplace bullying in Nigeria, examined differences in bullying experience among 313 human resource practitioners in Nigeria. Gender emerged as an antecedent of bullying with Nigerian women targeted the more at work through verbal abuse, administrative bullying and social exclusion. Oghojafor, Muo and Olufayo (2012) examined the subject of bullying amongst 300 employees in public and private service employment and warned that lack of organisational policies on workplace bullying could lead to increased incidents of bullying adjudged low at the time of the research studies. Emerging research data appear to confirm those fears. Ogbonnaya, Ukegbu, Aguwa and Emma-Ukaegbu (2012) reported amongst health workers in a tertiary hospital high psychological violence perpetrated by senior officials and physical assaults perpetrated by patients and their relatives. Darius and Aondover (2013) in another Federal hospital established a negative relationship between workplace bullying and job performance, and between job satisfaction and workplace bullying. Ojedokun, Oteri and Ogungbamila (2014) using the 'Big Five' traits model, identified among four hundred and seventy-five academics in seven tertiary institutions, personality traits that tend towards bullying.

The interest that is being generated on the subject of workplace bullying among researchers in Nigeria indicate a growing problem area. The implications, if not addressed, are dire: brain drain, premature termination of careers and potentials, low work morale and reprisal attacks from aggrieved parties who may not be able to afford legal redress. Nigeria needs to establish credibility in protecting the dignity of employees in the workplace so as to strategically position its market as a global competitor in the evolving world of business.

Method
This study utilises the qualitative research method which brings the researcher into direct contact with respondents in their natural settings. The use of a qualitative approach assists in exploring a subjective term such as workplace bullying (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

The respondents were contacts from social networks and interactions. The baseline for participation was a college degree to ensure that respondents not only grasped the issues involved but could also adequately express and communicate their views. In–depth interviews using semi-structured, open-ended questions were conducted with 30 participants randomly and evenly drawn from private and public organisations. The private sector referred to is the organised sector of limited liability companies. The sample population as depicted on tables 1 and 2 had an even gender (15 men and 15 women). The participants' age ranged between 26 and 60 years and the duration of work experience spanned between 2 and 35 years. The participants came from a heterogeneous work group of professionals and organisations and were entry-level, middle and top management executives. The interview process took a year-March 2013 to February 2014. The interview sessions ranged between 20 minutes and an hour, some in work environments while others spontaneously in social settings as opportunities arose. The respondents were based in Lagos state except for two on vacation.

Findings and Discussions
The interview began by, trying to ascertain the familiarity of participants with the 'workplace bullying' terminology. It was obvious that the term was not a familiar concept. One participant remarked that there was nothing like workplace bullying as bullies existed only in schools. She said what obtains in the office is simply '*bosses being bossy'.*The research literature has emphasised the thin line between firm management and bullying behaviour but the courts and regulatory authorities continually draw the line at the reasonability of the actions exhibited.

Respondents were then asked if they had encountered negative behaviours in the workplace, majority responded in the affirmative and gave illustrations. After enlightening the participants that some of the behaviours they cited actually constitute workplace bullying, the tone of the interview perked up with participants responding dryly that workplace bullying was part of the everyday work culture in their establishments.

Participants were then asked to explain in their own terms what they perceived to be workplace bullying, "victimisation", "intimidation", "oppression" and "harassment", were the key words used. Six participants defined it as: "*Your superior officer trying to lord it over you"; "Superior officer uses his power and position to suppress the intelligence and capability of the junior officer- just do what I want you to do, who is the oga[1] here?"; "Using authority to get people to do duties outside their official schedule''; "Taking advantage of a junior worker", "People using their influence and superiority to harass subordinates and peers"; "People in position banging and screaming at subordinates."*

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[1]'Oga' is the local Nigerian term for addressing or referring to anyone in a position of authority.

Power misuse as an explanatory factor for workplace bullying is consistent with existing research literature that identified power relations as a precursor to bullying behaviour. Owoyemi and Shadare (2010), expounding on the various sources of power within the organisation and the authority conferred by such powers to control resources and modify behaviour by punishments and rewards, warned as to the potential misuse or inadequate use of such powers if not properly harnessed. Participants argued that position and disparity in power enabled bullying behaviour as someone of equal status could not have got away with bullying them. One respondent said acquisition of power prompted people to exhibit inherent negative behaviours that they never would have dared to exhibit without the backing of power.

Twenty-one of the participants interviewed said they had experienced workplace bullying, two admitted to being the bully, seven said they had never been bullied. Two distinct personality types emerged from the group that said they had never experienced workplace bullying; self-assured individual types who consistently stood up for their rights and peacemakers who went out of their way to avoid conflicts and confrontations. According to Namie and Namie (2009), when bullying perpetrators try out their tactics on targets, the targets that refuse to fight back or immediately confront the bully open themselves up to subsequent mistreatments.

The literature research suggests that bullying perpetrators zone in on targets who display some degree of vulnerability; employees who have not learnt to establish appropriate emotional boundaries (WBI, 2013), those who by the nature of their upbringing have not developed assertive skills or are naïve (White, 2013); and conflict avoiders who are submissive and non-controversial (Coyne, Seigne & Randall 2000). Glaso, Matthiesen, Nielsen and Einarsen (2007) in a Scandinavian research comparing groups of bullied and non-bullied targets countered that bullying targets do not have a vulnerable profile but score higher on the intellectual dimension. This argument supports researchers like Namie and Namie (2009) who contend that perpetrators pick targets whose skills and talents pose a threat.

Respondents highlighted the bullying behaviours they had encountered as sexual harassment, verbal abuse, foul language, shouting and yelling, intellectual bullying, financial bullying, threats and intimidations, denial of due promotion, allocation of belittling tasks that had no bearing on the job, arbitrary change of duty roasters, physical assaults, peddling of rumours and lies, undue work pressure, unreasonable targets, unreasonable work hours, running fool errands, not being allowed to express an opinion and somebody else taking credit for work they had done. By frequency of recounts, shouting and yelling seemed the most dominant bullying behaviour followed by verbal abuse, threats and intimidations. Many of the respondents said shouting had become an office norm that they had become used to. Researchers contend that when bullying behaviour is not checked within organisations, it becomes an office norm that is imbibed by employees who either become perpetrators to avoid being bullied or targets for not joining in; a vicious circle of bullying thus emerges. This alarming dimension was confirmed by

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the female respondent who quipped in response to why she put up with her supervisor's bullying; "*For me to wait to get to the same position, I'll probably do the same.*"

Physical assaults such as senior officers slapping their subordinates appeared rampant within the public sector and, although this was more likely to occur between drivers and their bosses because of the power distance, participants cited instances of physical altercations also among white-collar workers. Bullying among professionals has been found to be just as common, differing only in nature (Salin, 2001). Research findings in South Africa (Cunniff & Mostert, 2012) report a higher experience of bullying in employees with lower education. Education provides people with "good conflict management skills" that reduce "likelihood of conflict escalations" (Moreno-Jiménez, Muñoz, Salin & Benadero, 2006, p.104).

Participants from the public sector described sexual harassment as very prominent in public establishments with young and inexperienced female staff being the most vulnerable group. A young male participant said part of the reasons he resigned from the public sector was because his female supervisors made regular "sexual passes" at him. Another male participant remarked that female students in institutions of learning particularly exposed themselves to sexual harassment by not studying diligently. He cited incidences of lecturers making sexual overtures to lazy female students who obliged them in return for pass marks in course they had actually failed. Fajana *et al* (2011) found that women in the Nigerian workplace have a higher risk of being bullied. However, South Africa reported a higher frequency of bullying in men despite the fact that Nigeria and South Africa have a culture of male dominance. The male employees are in the largest ethnic group and are thus black, while the minority whites are the dominant supervisory group (Cunniff and Mostert, 2012). This gives another example of how power dynamics work in bullying situations. Notelaers (2010), in a study of Flemish-speaking employees in the food industry, reported no difference in target between males and females.

Bullying behaviours reported in the public establishments were overt and personal, such as Sexual harassment, physical assault, suppression - being repressed from expressing opinions or ideas, financial bullying, and the assignment of belittling tasks that had no bearing on the job, etc. Those reported in the private sector were more covert and task-related, such as threats and intimidation, undue work pressure, unreasonable targets and unreasonable work hours, etc. Corporate organisations in the private sector tend to be more stringent about decorum. The participants from the public sector said the bureaucratic process of reporting a bullying situation was enough to deter a willing complainant. Not only did they have to route such complaints through the line managers who often were the culprits, the same managers were responsible for their performance appraisals and promotions; the respondents' feared retribution. Bullying in both sectors was mostly downwards. In the private sector, employees endured substantial bullying from clients because of management philosophy that "the customer is always right." One upward bullying was also recorded in an organisation where the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had unwittingly delegated his power through abdication of his role.

Respondents from the public sector said there was "financial bullying." However, research has not captured that under bullying behaviour; what is captured is the financial cost of bullying. Respondents defined "financial bullying" as people in authority converting the resources meant for departmental use to personal uses and expecting or compelling subordinates to execute the tasks without the required allocations. Work entitlements due to employees were also hijacked by those above in the hierarchical structure. Respondents said when they complained, though unofficially, they were advised to "wait for their turn." Corruption is an ingrained part of the Nigerian public service that continues to rob the economy off meaningful development.

A corporate culture of workplace bullying seems to exist in the banks. Employees complained of unreasonable targets and late work hours that endangered their safety and health. The pressure to perform with a reduced workforce in the midst of continuous job cuts to reduce overheads created an emotional strain as depicted by the participant who said he would do whatever it took to achieve results. According to him, he reports to a board of directors so when he comes under fire from them he has no choice but to pass the pressure to his subordinates. Hoel & Nielsen (2003) contend that people might bully at work to protect their interests. Stress plays a dual role in workplace bullying as a cause and aftermath. Research established higher stress levels in bullying perpetrators and targets (Einarsen, Mikkelsen & Matthiesen, 2005). Stress management programmes have been suggested to organisations for ameliorating the risk of bullying. (Hoel, Sparks & Cooper, 2001; Sheehan & Jordan, 2000).

All the participants said their organisations had no policy that defined workplace bullying. A respondent that had worked six years in a prominent financial institution said if her organisation had a staff hand-book, she was yet to see it. Another respondent gave an intriguing illustration of how bullying situations were resolved in his establishment where a 'yellow book' guides service conduct. According to him, reported cases of bullying are often investigated but if the perpetrator and target are both non-academic staff, the erring party would be sanctioned. If the perpetrator and target are both academic staff, an amicable resolution would be devised. If the perpetrator happened to be an academic staff and the target a non-academic staff, the academic staff never gets a sanction because an academic staff would head the disciplinary panel and academic staffs stick up for one another. Bullying in academic circles as described by the participants, occurs on three levels: between the non-academic and academic staff who they said 'have a superiority complex'; the older academic staff who feel they have paid their dues and the younger academic staff; and students and lecturers that are tyrants. One of the respondents, a lecturer said bullying students was necessary to make them study; however, according to the University and College Union (2008), "bullying and harassment are particularly unacceptable in institutions of learning because staff must be able to question and challenge received wisdom and to teach students how to do the same" (p.1).

Bullying also seemed prevalent in the health sector among the various health workers but from what respondents described, it was more of a tussle for supremacy that is intellectual

bullying: the bully looking down on the target because of intellectual or rhetoric skills; the consultants bulling the junior doctors; the doctors bulling the nurses; the matrons bullying the junior nurses and the nurses bulling the orderlies.

In response to why bulling behaviour occurs, Participants said it was a combination of personality, organisation and the environment. They cited stress, a diverse workforce, undefined roles, non-rotation of employees, resilient nature of Nigerians, ignorance of the law and individual rights, the respect culture, promotion guidelines that confine appraisal issues to line managers, lack of communication, and transparency on the part of the management of an organisation. Those that argued in favour of personality said that people with personal challenges in their individual lives transferred aggression to cover up feelings of inadequacy. The research literature has not been able to specifically nail the characteristics of bullying perpetrators or targets, but it is becoming glaring from studies that bullying behaviour emanates from the various influences that have helped to shape an individual.

Women in positions of authority were found to exhibit more bullying behaviour probably in misplaced assumptions that it proved they were just as capable as the men. Female participants agreed that they had more personality clashes working with female bosses than the male bosses. In a WBI (2014) online survey of 1,000 adults in the United States, 69% of bullies were men who preferred to target women, 57% over men while 60% of bullied targets were women who chose women targets 68% of the time. The tendency of the female gender to pick on one another in the workplace is explained in the Queen Bee Theory. The Queen Bee is the fertile female bee in a hive, whose glory and honour emanate from her productivity. Thus, any attempt by another female bee to usurp her position or authority brings about a conflict situation in which the queen bee tries to squash the perceived threat. Of interest also were some respondents' arguments that incompetent and lazy employees attracted and deserved workplace bullying for not pulling their weights on the job. However, when asked if bullying behaviour was acceptable as a standard work norm, majority conceded that under all circumstances decorum ought to be observed in the workplace.

Respondents who encountered bullying situations as targets or observers claimed, "It altered the work routine"; "created unnecessary agitations"; "destabilised everyone in the immediate vicinity"; "reduced productivity and creativity"; and "killed the team spirit as everyone began to fight for their personal interests." Some others expressed feelings of frustration, depression, loss of respect, de-motivation and demoralisation. Two respondents experienced psychosomatic conditions in form of heart palpitations, constant fevers and chills. Ironically one respondent said it made her more diligent and polite as she strove to prove to her bully boss that she merited the position she occupied.

Participants differed as to the necessity of a workplace bullying legislation. While some of the participants reacted that the problem of legislation was not so much a problem in Nigeria as the challenge of implementation and compliance, others said legislating workplace bullying

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would instill a measure of fear in the perpetrators. The bullying situations cited by the respondents were seldom resolved through concerted or deliberate efforts on the part of the management of organisations. Most situations resolved themselves when the perpetrator voluntarily left the organisation, the target resigned or either party got transferred elsewhere during general staff rotations. Other employees simply devised coping mechanisms as most of the participants did. Asked how they coped with bullying situations, one respondent said by being subservient, a significant number said by praying, another respondent said after a year of praying she had to confront her bully-boss when the situation became intolerable. That action perpetually put a stop to the bullying because the director was shocked that she could take a stand. Bullying targets that take the stance of just praying and doing nothing else invariably embolden perpetrators because in the practical world of business (law courts, disengagement and employment processes) substantiated evidence is heavily relied upon.

The level of social and educational exposure of respondents seemed to significantly affect how they perceived and reacted to workplace bullying. Respondents that were exposed by travel to other cultures or had worked previously in sophisticated work environments seemed more intolerant of bullying behaviours and were less likely to succumb to being targets or perpetrators. They seemed to have imbibed a culture that made them draw a firm line between acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour. On the other hand, respondents with narrowed work experience and exposure seemed more accepting of bullying behaviour. They had never worked elsewhere or worked in small organisations, so they naturally imbibed the norm they grew with. Such respondents were more likely to be bullied or perpetrate bullying behaviour because they do not know better. A respondent seemed confused when informed of the bulling phenomenon. His only work experience was in a military-like organisation. According to him there was no bullying in his organisation, the supervising manager simply minuted to the subordinates what he wanted done and they did it without asking questions. 'One happy family' was how he described the organisation where he had worked for eight years. His orientation affected his perception; a more assertive person might disagree and say not allowing subordinates to use their discretion or initiative was in itself bullying. Ironically in two different organisations where about three people cited various incidents of bullying, one person in the same organisation disagreed saying there was no bullying. Respondents perceived issues differently based on background, as culture significantly affects how people perceive and react to bullying.

Social status also seemed to influence on who got bullied in organisations. Respondents that had 'political godfathers' were not likely to be bullied. According to a respondent from the public sector, one phone call from the 'godfather' introducing the target as his 'protégé' would make the perpetrator relent. This goes to show the relationship between organisational behaviour and societal values. The organisation is a subset of the environment and derives its features from the society; thus, where the organisation does not create its own values, the values of the society become the value of the organisation.

Economic obligations significantly influenced how employees responded to bullying behaviour. The major consideration for most of the respondents in reacting was the economic

factor. "How would it affect my job? There are people depending on me." As a result, a significant number of the respondents chose silence rather than speak out and risk jeopardising their employment. Many participants responded that reporting was not likely to resolve the issue as their human resource personnel were often not empowered to act on major issues or tended to side with management out of fear of losing their jobs. Bullying is associated with intention to leave organisations in European research, but not in Nigeria, where the job opportunities are limited. People are trapped in deplorable employment situations for survival reasons. The African extended family culture complicates the situation as it provides a long line of dependants who the working populace caters for.

Culture plays a significant role in the silence that pervades workplace bullying in Nigeria. Apart from being generally religious and resilient, Nigerians as a matter of tradition do not confront or challenge authority; there is a cultural demand for respect (age and status) that makes younger people submissive and subordinates subservient, especially in the Yoruba and Hausa tribes. This latter point has been well argued in Power etal. (2011), who observed that,

Culture may relate to whether employees who are bullied seek assistance, publicise their plight, or suffer in silence. Differences within victims' behaviours across cultures are also a very important issue because of the implications for potential interventions. Presumably different organisational interventions are needed in cultures whose values render bullying more acceptable than in countries whose cultural values render bullying unacceptable and socially sanctioned (p.379).

The same pattern of bullying established in Britain exists in Nigeria, that is, downwards bullying, and the reasons are not far-fetched. British colonials introduced and established business structures and industry to the Nigerian economy and the master-servant structure they built and left behind is still in force. Against this background, Gladwell (2008) submits that Cultural legacies are powerful forces. They have deep roots and long lives. They persist generation after generation, virtually intact, even as the economic and social and demographic conditions that spawned them have vanished, and they play such a role in directing attitudes and behaviour that we cannot make sense of our world without them (p. 204).

Conclusion

Workplace bullying in Nigeria is enabled by management philosophies, prerogatives and bureaucratic processes which in turn affect whether people speak out or keep silent about bullying situations. To effectively tackle the menace, the power constructs within work establishments and the larger society need to be challenged and reprogrammed to provide equitable playing ground for everyone in the labour market. There are deeper societal issues ingrained in the subject of workplace bullying in Nigeria that can only be tackled by the government of the day, such as unemployment and the apathy of regulatory labour institutions. However, creating awareness as to the implications for establishments can place organisations on guard in taking precautionary measures. Employees can also take proactive stances that insulate them from the negative impact of such behaviours. This is a collective responsibility for scholars and practitioners in the field of management who have to continually strive for equitable and best practices in upholding the dictates of professionalism.

This study has helped to highlight the prevalence of workplace bullying in the Nigerian work environment and the context of its occurrence. The method is not without its limitations though. For example, the sample is not entirely representative of the Nigerian population in that Hausa respondents were not featured due to location constraints. Also, the respondents featured were those who were both available and willing to participate. Majority of the respondents were middle management and entry-level staff; having top management executives could have brought a balanced perspective to the issues that emerged. Consequently, further studies are recommended that capture top management perspective in bullying situations as a prerequisite for developing intervention measures for workplace bullying in Nigeria.

Table 1: Demographic Features of Participants (Public Sector)

S/N	Gender	Age	Academic Qualification	Designation	Industry	Work Experience (years)	Profession
1	F	55	Bachelor of Education. (B.Ed.) History. Master of Education (M.Ed.) Guidance & Counselling.	Director	Public/District Education	33	Teaching
2	F	50	LL. B (Law)	Deputy Director	Public/Regulation	25	Legal
3	M	49	M.Ed. Guidance & Counselling	Deputy Director	Public/District Education	27	Teaching
4	M	48	Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), Master of Science (M.Sc.) Psychology	Asst. Director	Public/District Education	23	Psychologist
5	M	48	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)	Senior Lecturer	Public/ University	20	Teaching
6	M	45	B.Sc. Political Science	Assistant Principal Education Officer	Public/District Education	27	Political scientist
7	F	42	B.Sc. Business Administration	Human Resource (HR) Officer	Public/Local Government	15	Human Resource
8	M	39	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (M.B.B.S)	Sectional Head	Public/Health	10	Medical
9	M	40	M.B.B.S	Senior Lecturer & Consultant.	Public/University	11	Medical
10	F	38	B.Sc. Administration	Administrative Officer	Public/University	7	Administration
11	F	38	LL.B	Chief State Counsel	Public/Ministry	14	Legal
12	F	38	LL.B	Chief State Counsel	Public/Ministry	14	Legal
13	F	35	LL.B	Asst. Chief State Counsel	Public/Ministry	13	Legal
14	M	40	Bachelor of Science. Insurance & Actuarial Science	Administrative Officer	Public/Regulation	8	Administration
15	M	30	Master of Science (M.Sc.) Management	Programme Officer	Public/University	5	Administration

Table 2: Demographic Features of Participants (Private Sector)

S/N	Gender	Age	Academic qualification	Designation	Industry	(Yrs) Work experience	Profession
16	M	60	B.Sc. Electrical & Electronics Engineering. M.Sc. Electrical & Electronics	Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O)	Telecommunications	35	Engineer
17	M	42	LL.B (Law)	C.E.O	Financial Services	20	Legal
18	F	41	MILR (Masters in Industrial & Labour Relations)	General Manager	Oil & Gas	11	Human Resource (HR)
19	M	38	B.Sc. Accounting. Masters in Business Administration (MBA)	Manager	Financial Services	10	Accounting
20	F	36	B.Sc. Computer Science. Masters in Information Technology.	IT Manager	Logistics	8	Information Technology (IT)
21	F	35	B.Sc. Accounting	Manager	Manufacturing	8	Accounting
22	M	35	B.Sc. Economics, MILR	Manager	Power & Energy	10	Engineer
23	F	34	B.Sc. Accounting. MBA	C.E.O	Private Practice (Hr Consulting)	5	HR
24	M	33	B.A (French). Master of Public and International Affairs (MPIA)	Banking Officer	Financial Services	4	Banking
25	F	32	B.Sc. Business Administration, MILR	HR Manager	Health	4	HR
26	M	34	B.Sc. Economics, MILR	HR Manager	Power & Energy	8	HR
27	M	30	B.Sc. Banking	Officer	Financial Services	2	Banking
28	F	26	B. Eng. Chemical & Process Engineering, M.Sc. International & Oil Gas Management.	Executive	Oil & Gas	2	Engineer
29	F	27	B.sc Criminology & Criminal Justice	Security Specialist	Private Practice	3	Criminal Investigation
30	F	29	B.Sc. Mass Communication	Executive Assistant	Financial Services	6	Banking

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