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# Workplace bullying among New Zealand veterinarians

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Wendy Rasmussen

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## Abstract

Workplace bullying is a global issue associated with devastating consequences for individuals and is costly to organisations. Veterinarians play a vital role in New Zealand and whilst there has been considerable research on workplace stress within the profession, little is known about the extent to which workplace bullying occurs and the problems it gives rise to. This study examined job demands (team conflict and destructive leadership) and job resources (ethical leadership and perceived organisational support) and their relationship to employees' physical health, level of strain and organisational variables in the context of workplace bullying. In addition, the buffering role of psychological capital against workplace bullying was examined. This study investigated these relationships by means of an online survey, using multiple regression analyses to test the main hypotheses.

Workplace bullying was prevalent amongst this sample of New Zealand veterinarians and was associated with worse physical health, higher levels of strain, reduced self-rated job performance and higher intentions to quit. Destructive leadership and team conflict had direct effects on personal and organisational variables and created an environment where workplace bullying was able to flourish. Workplace bullying did not mediate relationships to the extent expected. Positive resources reduced the effects of workplace bullying on strain and self-reported job performance but not on physical health symptoms, intentions to quit and absenteeism. Overall, the results indicate negative work conditions are stronger than positive work conditions and are associated with undesirable individual and organisational variables. Workplace bullying is a potent stressor and is fostered by negative work environments. This study concludes it is vital that organisations create positive work environments to prevent or reduce bullying from occurring.

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## Chapter One: Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is a global issue. Bullying can be found across all levels of organisations, and in all industries. Whilst there is a lack of consensus about a core definition of workplace bullying, there are several key features that are generally agreed upon: negative behaviours are unwanted and repeated, and targets find it difficult to defend themselves (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011b). For the present research workplace bullying was defined as a situation where a person feels they have been repeatedly on the receiving end of negative actions from one or more other people, in a situation where it is difficult to defend themselves against these actions. The negative actions could be physical or non-physical (e.g. verbal abuse). A one-off incident is not defined as bullying (adapted from Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007).

Researchers have yet to reach a consensus on whether there needs to be an intent by a bully to cause harm to the target. Saunders, Huynh, and Goodman-Delahunty (2007) believe the repetition and persistence of negative behaviours indicate intent, but it is difficult to measure or prove an intention to cause harm. Regardless of intentions, bullying has harmful consequences so proving harmful intent behind the negative behaviours is not necessary for behaviours to be considered bullying (Einarsen et al., 2011b).

Workplace bullying behaviours can be physical or psychological, although psychological bullying is more commonly reported in workplaces than physical bullying. Workplace bullying behaviours may be person-related, such as social isolation, spreading rumours, belittling or making insulting comments, or work-related, such as excessive monitoring, or giving unreasonable workloads or deadlines (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011a). A list of negative behaviours which can be associated with workplace bullying is presented in Table 1. These behaviours are often subtle, such as withholding information or socially isolating the target, and can escalate over time. Most frequently, targets report verbal abuse or socially

isolating behaviours rather than physical bullying (Rayner & Hoel, 1997).

Einarsen et al. (2011b) describe the repeated nature of bullying as a key feature which causes harm to the target, and which distinguishes bullying from other negative workplace behaviours such as harassment, discrimination or conflict. While each negative incident considered in isolation may seem insignificant, the subtle, insidious nature of the behaviours may harm targets while enabling bullies to deny that any bullying has taken place. The incidents may be difficult to prove but collectively they constitute bullying and can have powerful consequences. It is the persistence rather than the actual behaviours that is harmful (Einarsen et al., 2011a; Leymann, 1996).

Table 1. Examples of negative behaviours associated with workplace bullying  
Adapted from WorkSafe Best Practice Guidelines (WorkSafe New Zealand, 2014) and NAQ-R Questionnaire (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009)

Direct or person-related behaviours	Indirect or work-related behaviours
Ridiculed, insults, jokes, sarcasm	Withholding information
Belittling remarks, lies being told, gossip or rumours spread	Removing responsibility, given work below level of competence
Being ignored, excluded, silent treatment	Contributions being undervalued
Insulting comments about private life	Being constantly criticism
Being verbally abused	Unreasonable monitoring
Inaccurate accusations	Excluding, isolating the person, ignoring person's views
Physical attacks, shoving	Sabotage
Being shouted or yelled at	Receiving no support from manager
Receiving suggestions to quit job	Being denied opportunities
Undermining integrity, opinions marginalised	Unsupported allegations, unjustified disciplinary hearings
Receiving threats of violence	Being given unmanageable workloads
Suggestive glances, gestures, or dirty looks	

As workplace bullying behaviours are often subtle, measurement largely relies on self-reporting. Self-labelling and behavioural questionnaires are the most common methods used to research workplace bullying. The self-labelling method relies on participants understanding the concept of workplace bullying and correctly evaluating whether or not the workplace behaviours they have experienced meet the definition of bullying (Einarsen et al., 2009; Einarsen et al., 2011a). This approach is quick to administer on a questionnaire but is associated with a number of concerns. Participants may not recognise the behaviours they have experienced as bullying (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001); they may believe that negative behaviours are inherent in the job, and they may want to avoid the stigma associated with labelling themselves as having been bullied (Agervold, 2007). Behavioural questionnaires provide an inventory of behaviours, and participants report the frequency with which they have experienced each of these behaviours. A cut-off criterion identifies those who are categorised as bullied. The different methods used to measure workplace bullying may contribute to the wide range of prevalence rates obtained (Einarsen et al., 2011a; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). In general, self-labelling methods produce lower prevalence rates than behavioural questionnaires, and combining both methods may better capture all facets of the bullying construct (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001).

Comparisons of workplace bullying rates are difficult due to the varying definitions and measures used by researchers, and because acceptable or tolerated behaviours differ between organisations, industries and cultures (Bentley et al., 2009). International research using behavioural measures has reported prevalence rates of 28% in the United States (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007), 6.2% in Norway (Nielsen et al., 2009) and 4.8% in Denmark (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). In New Zealand, Thirlwall and Haar (2010) compared frequency rates of negative behaviours. They found up to six times higher prevalence of bullying behaviours occurring in New Zealand than in the European studies, and a similar level to those found in

the USA. In four New Zealand industry sectors, bullying rates ranged from 11 to 22 %, with health and education reporting the highest prevalence (Bentley & Thomas, 2009), while in another study 70% of occupational health and safety practitioners reported bullying cases had occurred in their organisation in the last two years and 29% agreed or strongly agreed workplace bullying was a problem in their organisation (Catley et al., 2013).

Hauge, Skogstad, and Einarsen (2010) describe workplace bullying as one of the most harmful sources of stress in organisations. Workplace bullying impacts on a person's well-being, with targets reporting higher levels of strain than non-targets (O'Driscoll et al., 2011). Hogh, Mikkelsen and Hansen's (2011) review on health and well-being associated with workplace bullying show significant negative effects on targets, which develop early in the bullying experience, can increase in severity and become chronic over time, and can persist for a considerable time afterwards, sometimes for years (Einarsen et al., 2011b; Thirlwall & Haar, 2010). Being the target of repeated negative acts has been associated with psychological symptoms including anxiety, depression (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002), increased negative emotions (Vie, Glasø, & Einarsen, 2011), helplessness and hyperactivity (Leymann, 1990), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012), and increased risk of suicide (Routley & Ozanne-Smith, 2012). Bullying is also associated with poorer physical health including musculoskeletal complaints (Vie, Glasø, & Einarsen, 2012), cardiovascular disease (Kivimäki et al., 2003), sleep disturbances (Hansen, Hogh, Garde, & Persson, 2014; MacIntosh, 2012), headaches, fatigue, and frequent respiratory illnesses (Rayner, 2000), all of which have impacts on individuals, families and workplaces. Higher use of alcohol and drugs has also been found in bullying targets (Van Heugten, 2010).

A person's job can be an important part of their self-identity, as work contributes to a large proportion of an adult's life. Experiencing escalating negative behaviours over time may

threaten targets' self-esteem and self-confidence and leave them questioning their professional competence (Einarsen, Hoel, & Cooper, 2002; Leymann, 1990). Experiences of bullying can mean that a target's self-efficacy or self-identity may be threatened (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Tuckey, Chrisopoulos, and Dollard (2012) suggest prolonged exposure to bullying may erode self-belief in targets' ability to cope with job tasks. Workplace bullying may also professionally isolate targets and lead to feelings of a loss of control at work (Van Heugten, 2013). Bullying may lead to targets leaving their jobs or professions, resulting in financial strain for individuals as well as costs to organisations (Leymann, 1990).

The longer bullying occurs, the more severe the health impacts are (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996). The subtle erosion over time of health, social support and personal psycho-social resources affects targets' ability to cope. Coping is an adaptive process to deal with demands appraised as stressful. There is evidence linking bullying with stress, illness and disease, however all stressed individuals do not necessarily become ill (Abraham, Conner, Jones, & O'Connor, 2008). Individuals differ in the situations they find stressful, and the outcomes of stressful situations depend on factors including stressor duration and intensity, appraisal processes, and coping strategies and resources (Colligan & Higgins, 2006). Nielsen, Magerøy, Gjerstad, and Einarsen (2014) conclude that targets' perceptions and evaluations of their bullying experience, and their coping strategies, influence health and well-being outcomes.

Targets' attempts to cope with bullying may result in stress, energy loss and reduced health and well-being (Tuckey & Neall, 2014). While it is unclear whether a limited repertoire of coping strategies or poor coping in general are antecedents or consequences of bullying, Einarsen, Raknes, and Matthiesen (1994) report lower levels of coping among targets of bullying than non-targets. The coping literature has identified many broad types of coping strategies however one categorisation that is widely used is Lazarus and Folkman's (1984)

emotion-focused and problem-focused coping. The most effective coping strategy varies with the individuals' appraisal of the situation and available resources. However workplace bullying is a stressor that often does not respond to problem-focused coping strategies such as working harder, confronting a bully or raising the problem with management or human resources personnel (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003), especially in organisations that are tolerant of negative behaviours. While there is no right or wrong coping strategy for a given situation, some are more effective than others. Using avoidance to cope with the bully within the workplace may have implications on the targets ability to effectively do their job. In many such situations, the most adaptive form of coping may be to leave the organisation (Dzurec, Kennison, & Albataineh, 2014). However, whilst this strategy may resolve the bullying issue for the target, there may be negative implications (e.g. financial) for both the target and organisation.

Delays in a target recognising they are being bullied, identifying and making use of organisational reporting and response systems, and the time it takes to gather evidence prior to legal or organisational intervention exacerbate the issue and increase the risk that the negative behaviours become accepted or normalised in the workplace (Chan-Mok, Caponecchia, & Winder, 2014; Samnani & Singh, 2012). A lack of response to workplace bullying by the organisation is a further source of distress (Thirlwall & Haar, 2010). Core to the bullying experience is targets' beliefs that they have been treated unfairly (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). Feeling their rights have been violated and experiencing frustration about the lack of redress may contribute to the feelings of helplessness that many targets of workplace bullying face (Leymann, 1990). Trépanier, Fernet, and Austin (2015) recommend that organisations need to take timely action to resolve workplace bullying. This requirement is in line with the New Zealand Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) (Health and Safety at

Work Act, 2015), which emphasises reducing or minimising risk, however, by its very definition, workplace bullying must occur over a prolonged period of time.

Bullying is also costly to organisations in terms of reduced productivity and commitment, increased absenteeism and turnover (Einarsen et al., 2011a; O'Driscoll et al., 2011). Bentley et al. (2009) suggest that raising awareness of the organisational costs associated with workplace bullying may provide organisations with the incentive to address the issue. Research over the last 20 years has continued to support Leymann's (1996) claim that many targets of bullying leave through transfer, dismissal or voluntarily resignation. Although Berthelsen, Skogstad, Lau, and Einarsen (2011) found targets' intentions to quit persisted over time it did not necessarily result in them leaving the workplace. Reasons for staying may relate to available job opportunities, age, education level or the need to relocate. While workplace bullying increases intentions to quit (Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014; Quine, 1999), organisational support can provide a buffer, reducing intentions to quit (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008).

The legal context: Workplace bullying and hazard management.

In Scandinavian countries where much of the early workplace bullying research was conducted, laws have been created to address the issue (Hoel & Einarsen, 2010). While these have raised awareness of the issue, Hoel and Einarsen (2010) believe action has not been adequate when bullying is reported due to organisations' ineffective management and lenient consequences from regulatory agencies. Individual cases are difficult to align with regulations, given the diversity of workplace bullying, and subjective experiences may be difficult to fit with objective criteria (Hoel & Einarsen, 2010). Researchers in Norway compared workplace bullying prevalence rates and found a decrease from 8.6% in the early 1990s (Einarsen & Skogstad,

1996) to 4.6% in 2005 (Nielsen et al., 2009) but it is unknown if this reduction is a direct result of the introduction of workplace bullying prevention legislation.

In New Zealand, organisations are obliged to provide and maintain a safe work environment for their employees. Under the HSWA (Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015), employers have a primary duty of care to workers' health and safety against hazards and risk. WorkSafe New Zealand regulates the HSWA (Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015). Consequences if obligations are not met under the HSWA (Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015) include compliance notices, for example, where changes are required, or enforcement, such as infringement fees or criminal proceedings. Organisations need to take all reasonably practicable steps to minimise or eliminate health and safety risks. The focus is on risk from both the work undertaken and the work environment that has potential to cause physical or psychological illness or injury.

To date, research has established that workplace bullying is a health and safety issue that seriously impacts individuals, which means that it must be effectively managed. However, there is no legal definition of workplace bullying in New Zealand, which makes seeking legal redress difficult for targets. The subjective, covert and subtle nature of many negative behaviours makes it difficult to provide evidence of bullying which makes it difficult to prove in a legal context and can impede the investigation of complaints. It would be challenging to provide a definition of workplace bullying that captures all relevant negative behaviours however WorkSafe New Zealand has developed Best Practice Guidelines (WorkSafe New Zealand, 2014), providing organisations with tools to prevent and respond effectively to workplace bullying. Whilst legislation is important to provide a basis for action, this guideline encourages organisations to actively engage in deterring workplace bullying through developing constructive work environments and organisational culture.



## The veterinary profession in New Zealand

The aim of the present study was to examine workplace demands related to bullying and distress, and the positive organisational and personal resources which may help reduce bullying and buffer against its negative effects on wellbeing. The research focuses specifically on the veterinary profession in New Zealand, as little has been done to date to look at bullying in this context.

Veterinarians play a vital role in New Zealand society by providing care to companion, service, research and agricultural animals and wildlife. Prevention and control of diseases protects humans and animal welfare (National Research Council (US), 2005). New Zealanders have a high pet ownership rate and there is evidence that pets are increasingly regarded as 'one of the family' and that the availability of good veterinary care is highly valued by owners (Revington, 2012). Agriculture is one of the primary industries in New Zealand (New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, n.d.) and veterinarians provide an important support for agriculture in New Zealand ensuring food safety and animal productivity. With much native wildlife endangered or threatened in New Zealand, veterinarians involved in wildlife rescue, treatment, rehabilitation and release can have a vital role in species survival (Massey University, 2014). Veterinary training is lengthy and intense, and there are concerns about the retention of veterinarians in the profession (Bartram, Yadegarfar, & Baldwin, 2009b). There is a shortage of veterinarians in New Zealand, especially in rural areas (CareersNZ, n.d.) which provides good job security however a focus on work conditions may reduce attrition and maintain employee well-being.

Veterinarians report high levels of stress, and may experience poor psychological health with reported high levels of depression, anxiety and suicide (Bartram, Yadegarfar, & Baldwin, 2009a). Jones-Fairnie, Ferroni, Silburn, and Lawrence (2008) report psychological distress levels among Australian veterinarians to be double that of the general population. Gardner

and Hini (2006) found that self-reported suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts occurred in a small proportion of New Zealand veterinarians, and that veterinarians were unlikely to actively seek support from within their organisation. Although Skegg, Firth, Gray, and Cox (2010) show New Zealand veterinary work was not a high risk occupation for suicide, increased levels of suicide in veterinarians proportionate to other occupations have been reported in several countries (Jones-Fairnie et al., 2008; Mellanby, 2005; Platt, Hawton, Simkin, & Mellanby, 2010). The reason for this is unknown therefore it is important to gain a better understanding of this occupational group.

Bartram et al. (2009a) report that veterinarians, compared to the general population, have more stress from higher work demands and lower organisational support. Stressors identified in the veterinary profession include maintaining relationships with clients whilst balancing responsibility for animal welfare and client wishes, keeping up with technology (Gardner & Hini, 2006), work-related travel (Reijula et al., 2003), and work-family conflict, long work hours, on-call, demanding workloads, and low managerial support (Bartram et al., 2009b). Stressors inherent to veterinary work also include physical demands such as animal handling (Fritschi et al., 2006; Phillips, Jeyaretnam, & Jones, 2000), and performing euthanasia (Meehan & Bradley, 2007; Tran, Crane, & Phillips, 2014).

Female veterinarians are more likely to report poor psychological health and higher stress than male veterinarians (Fritschi, Morrison, Shirangi, & Day, 2009; Shirangi, Fritschi, Holman, & Morrison, 2013). Fritschi et al. (2009) report this is consistent with the wider community, where females have higher levels of anxiety and depression than males. Long work hours were associated with higher levels of psychological stress in female veterinarians (Shirangi et al., 2013). Over half of female vets with two or more children worked part time hours and this cohort report lower stress levels than females without children. Demands outside the

workplace may impact on female veterinarians' stress levels and well-being differently than their male colleagues. This gender difference is of concern as a substantial increase in the percentage of females in the profession has been reported in several countries (Shirangi et al., 2013).

Veterinarians in small practices may have additional responsibilities associated with managing the business, although small businesses have advantages such as a flatter organisational structure that reduces bureaucracy, increases responsiveness to individual circumstances and provides opportunities for social interactions. However, despite the extensive literature on stressors in the veterinary field, there is little on bullying. One of the aims of the present study was to investigate the organisational and personal resources that may influence veterinarians' experiences of negative behaviour at work, and the potential health impacts of such experiences. The next chapter will examine health and organisational variables that have been associated with demanding work environments and behaviours and the resources that may influence these.

## Chapter Two: Job Demands and Resources

Aspects of the work environment may result in workplace bullying (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2007). In particular, stressful work environments provide conditions where bullying is more likely to develop and flourish (Hauge et al., 2007; Van den Broeck, Baillien, & De Witte, 2011). High workload and poor work conditions are positively related to workplace bullying (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009) with leadership playing an important role (Leymann, 1996). In workplaces where bullying occurs, both targets and non-targets of workplace bullying rate their work environment less favourably (Skogstad, Torsheim, Einarsen, & Hauge, 2011) indicating these are poor work environments rather than negative rating bias on the part of the target. Notelaers, De Witte, and Einarsen (2010) found whilst conflict and poor leadership produced environments related to workplace bullying, there are also specific work characteristics that are non-bullying provoking. Minimising work environment stressors that place demands on employees and lead to workplace bullying may reduce the risk of workplace bullying occurring. The focus of the present research was on a set of personal and organisational resources hypothesised to be relevant to managing the work demands represented by workplace bullying.

### Job Demands Resources Model

The Job Demands Resources (JD-R) model proposes that employee well-being and organisational outcomes are influenced by workplace demands and resources. Demands are the “physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). Job demands may include workload and role conflict and may place physical or psychological strain on an employee.

Demands in the workplace can be mitigated by organisational and personal resources. Hobfoll (1989) defines resources “as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies” (p. 516). Resources are valuable and people attempt to protect, conserve and build their resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Employees with more job resources available to them tend to cope better with demands, and demonstrate higher levels of engagement and lower levels of exhaustion (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Further, job resources may provide motivation to achieve and develop and are important regardless of job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

General and job specific demands and resources can be categorised, making this model flexible enough to be applied across all types of occupations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Regardless of the nature of occupational demands or resources, when demands are high and resources are low, strain is more likely to occur; conversely, when demands are matched by appropriate resources, the outcome is not strain but increased levels of engagement. Accordingly ensuring a match between demands and resources is seen as important to reduce stress and improve psychological well-being.

Individuals in demanding working conditions expend less energy dealing with demands if there are high levels of environmental and personal resources (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Law, Dollard, Tuckey, and Dormann (2011) describe workplace bullying as a job demand and found that it was related to low levels of job resources. Using the JD-R model as a framework, the present study examines the relationships between workplace bullying, team conflict and destructive leadership as job demands, psychological capital (PsyCap) as a personal resource, perceived organisational support (POS) and ethical leadership as organisational resources, and

their relationship with strain, physical health symptoms, self-rated job performance, intentions to quit and absenteeism.

Figure 1 depicts the predicted relationships between study variables based on the JD-R model. Job demands, team conflict and destructive leadership, are expected to have a direct effect on strain, physical health symptoms, self-rated job performance, intentions to quit and absenteeism. Workplace bullying is expected to have a direct effect on these variables. It is also expected to mediate the relationship between team conflict and destructive leadership and strain, physical health symptoms, self-rated job performance, intentions to quit and absenteeism. In addition, perceived organisational support, psychological capital and ethical leadership are expected to moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and strain, physical health symptoms, self-rated job performance, intentions to quit and absenteeism.

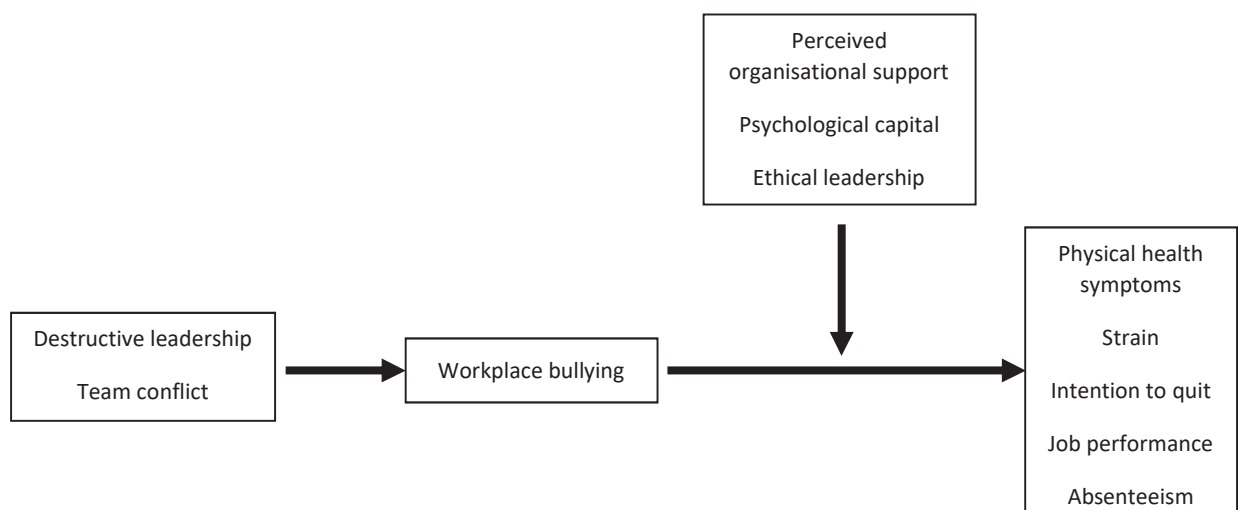


Figure 1. Proposed model of relationships for the present study

## Workplace bullying and Demands

### Destructive leadership

Organisational leadership can foster workplace bullying, buffer its negative effects, or prevent it (Harold & Holtz, 2015; Hauge et al., 2011; Nielsen, 2013; Stouten et al., 2010). It is important to include leadership in workplace bullying research as up to 80 percent of targets report having been bullied by a leader (Rayner, Hoel, & Cooper, 2001) and leaders hold power within organisations. Destructive leadership is defined as “the systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of his/her subordinates” (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007, p. 208). Employees working under a destructive leader may develop stress symptoms that impact on their health and well-being (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996). Organisations may also suffer with lost productivity, higher absenteeism and turnover (Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

Shaw, Erickson, and Harvey (2011) identify seven distinct destructive leadership types based on leader behaviour, ranging from actively aggressive and unethical behaviours to passive and incompetent behaviours. Whilst there is a wide range of types of destructive leadership, they are all harmful to some degree and may increase bullying in the workplace. Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser (2007) believe destructive leaders do not work in isolation. Destructive leaders require employees to follow or support their actions and a conducive organisational environment. Leaders hold power within an organisation and organisational climate and culture are therefore important for destructive leaders to exist (Shaw et al., 2011). Responsibility for effectively managing or reducing the risk of bullying in the workplace lies with top management, who also set the organisational climate and are in the position to condone or address issues (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011).

Destructive leadership potentially contributes to workplace bullying either directly or indirectly. Passive leaders may foster negative behaviours by ignoring issues which may then escalate (Harold & Holtz, 2015). Bullying targets report that a lack of response to workplace bullying is harmful, as it revictimises them and shows other employees that negative behaviours will be condoned without consequences (Ferris, 2004). In contrast, actively aggressive leaders may bully their employees or support bullying behaviours by others, perhaps explaining their actions as tough management as necessary to achieve organisational goals (Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2010). Destructive leadership is a strong predictor of workplace bullying as it provides a work environment conducive to bullying (Bentley et al., 2012; Hauge et al., 2007). Where there is conflict between a leader and employee, the leaders' perception of the conflict is critical (Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2012). If the conflict is perceived as a personal threat or criticism then the leader may attempt to regain power or retaliate for perceived insubordination. In doing so, the power imbalance may turn the conflict into negative behaviours that constitute workplace bullying.

The present study looked at destructive leadership as a work demand, as well as a correlate of workplace bullying. The work environment was expected to influence the impact workplace bullying has on the targeted employee. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Workplace bullying will mediate the relationship between destructive leadership and

- a. Strain
- b. Physical health symptoms
- c. Job performance
- d. Intentions to quit
- e. Absenteeism



## Team conflict

Teamwork is essential in many workplaces yet when employees work closely with others conflict may occur. A team conflict is an interpersonal issue between members of a team that negatively impacts on their performance or ability to achieve goals (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Conflict is a multifaceted stressor and the same conflict may be perceived differently by team members. Team conflict occurs when an employee believes the interests of another team member will negatively impact on them (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Team conflict may occur, for example, when employees want the same thing and resources are scarce, or when team members have different values, want different outcomes, disagree on the best way to achieve goals, hold incompatible views or differing opinions about job tasks (Jehn et al., 2012).

When conflict within a team is well managed and team members resolve problems and morale is restored, team conflict can be positive or even provide additional benefits to the organisation (De Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012). Team conflict that is perceived as a challenge or amicable disagreement may be beneficial within a team and enhance performance, planning and problem-solving (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). By working together to overcome conflict and achieve goals, teams may become more cohesive. Further, team conflict may help maintain an even power balance (Jehn et al., 2012) by allowing team members to contribute thereby reducing the likelihood of a conflict developing into workplace bullying.

Team conflict has an element of threat and anxiety to it (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003) and if poorly managed may manifest into long term negative consequences for the individuals, the team and the organisation. Conflict may be perceived as a threat to one's self-concept (De Wit et al., 2012) or may be associated with negative emotions, anxiety and reduced well-being (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Team conflict elicits negative emotions and requires coping resources to mitigate the impact on well-being (Dijkstra, van Dierendonck, & Evers, 2005). Dijkstra et al.

(2005) found conflict was related to helplessness resulting in increased stress and reduced well-being. In a team environment these reactions are not conducive to resolving conflict and there is a risk conflict may escalate and a power imbalance develop. Team conflicts may divert attention away from work tasks whilst energy is spent on managing the conflict and emotional consequences.

Poorly managed team conflict can lead to dysfunctional teams and a toxic work environment (Costa, Passos, & Bakker, 2015; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003) and negative outcomes are likely. Conflict may disrupt the entire team and reduce productivity or interfere with their ability to achieve goals, as energy and attention will shift from achieving goals to resolving the conflict (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Jehn et al., 2012). Research on team conflict has predominantly focused on its influence on team performance. However, how team conflict is managed may influence not only performance outcomes (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003) but employee turnover, absenteeism and health (Spector & Jex, 1998).

Team members' interpersonal relationships may influence how they perceive or how receptive they are to other team members' ideas or actions. A team members' willingness to invest in the team relationships and their prior interactions with team members may determine the outcome (Rispens, Greer, Jehn, & Thatcher, 2011). Rispens et al. (2011) believe teams with close working relationships are more likely to attempt to restore team cohesion and are likely to experience less negative emotions from team conflict. Team conflict in close teams, such as those found in small businesses, should therefore be less likely to escalate into workplace bullying.

How team conflict is viewed by organisations is dependent on the importance placed on outcomes (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Are profits and performance the priority or employee

well-being? Organisations need to balance challenging teams to, for example, generate new ideas, identify problems or develop alternative processes whilst maintaining morale and well-being. Despite a lack of consensus on potential benefits from team conflict, the extant literature agrees team conflict is negative. Organisations need to effectively manage team conflict to prevent it escalating into workplace bullying and to avoid the negative consequences.

The present study looked at team conflict as a work demand that was expected to influence the impact workplace bullying has on the targeted employee. Thus, workplace bullying was hypothesised to mediate the relationship between team conflict and organisational variables and employees' health and well-being.

Hypothesis 2: Workplace bullying will mediate the relationship between team conflict and

- a. Strain
- b. Physical health symptoms
- c. Job performance
- d. Intentions to quit
- e. Absenteeism

## Workplace bullying and Resources

### Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership is defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships” (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120). Ethical leaders are characterised by personal values and qualities such as honesty, integrity and trustworthiness, and by good communication, appropriate reinforcement and fair and robust decision-making (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders act as role models for ethical behaviours in that they hold others accountable for their behaviours and actions, and

create positive work environments (Brown & Treviño, 2006). In addition to being role models, ethical leaders actively encourage and communicate ethical behaviours to employees. Ethical leaders make fair, value-based decisions that consider the ethical consequences for the organisation and employees. Leaders play an important role in establishing the work environment, which has been identified as an antecedent for workplace bullying (Hauge et al., 2007; Leymann, 1996).

Stouten et al. (2010) believe ethical leaders can protect employees from becoming the target of workplace bullying through their influence on the work environment. They found ethical leaders positively influence employees' perceptions of their work environment by ensuring fairness and moral work conditions. Ethical leadership is positively related to employees' ethical behaviour and is associated with lower levels of bullying (Hauge et al., 2011; Stouten et al., 2010). When ethical leadership is high, employees are more likely to act in ethical ways, reducing negative behaviours. Workplace bullying is unethical behaviour, therefore ethical leadership should act to reduce or prevent bullying. Ethical leaders are responsible for setting acceptable moral and behavioural standards and for enforcing them by holding bullies to account for their actions. In addition, ethical leadership may buffer negative work experiences by increasing personal resources such as self-esteem and create a fair and trusting work environment (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016).

Work characteristics are important antecedents of workplace bullying and organisational resources may influence the impact to employees' health and well-being and costs to the organisation. Ethical leadership was expected to influence the relationship between workplace bullying and health, well-being and organisational variables. Thus,

Hypothesis 3: Ethical leadership will moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and

- a. Strain
- b. Physical health symptoms
- c. Job performance
- d. Intentions to quit
- e. Absenteeism

#### Perceived organisational support

Perceived organisational support (POS) describes employees' beliefs about the extent the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). The concept of POS emerged from organisational support theory which proposes that employees personify the organisation by ascribing human-like characteristics to it. These characteristics are based on qualities such as caring, fairness and supportiveness (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Consequently, the employee forms a belief about POS based on how their contributions are valued and their well-being cared for by the organisation and whether increased effort will be noticed and rewarded (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). POS is beneficial within organisations as it impacts employees' behaviours, attitudes and actions. Low levels of POS have been related to absenteeism (Eisenberger et al., 1986), reduced job satisfaction (Colakoglu, Culha, & Atay, 2010; Stamper & Johlke, 2003) and intentions to quit (Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

The relationship between organisation and employee is a reciprocal one based on expectations and obligations. The psychological processes believed to underlie POS are reciprocity norms, effort-reward beliefs and fulfilment of socio-emotional needs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS predicts an employee's affiliation with the organisation and their feelings of value and commitment. Subsequently, POS impacts on employee behaviour and attitudes because of reciprocity norms. Reciprocity norms are social expectations that a sense of obligation forms

to respond, in kind, to repay what has been provided to you (Gouldner, 1960). Therefore, high levels of POS create a sense of obligation to repay the organisation. Effort-reward beliefs are an employees' expectation that increased effort will be reciprocated by increased rewards from the organisation. The resources provided such as remuneration, job autonomy and support from supervisors and colleagues provides employees with evidence their organisation values them (Sumathi, Kamalanabhan, & Thenmozhi, 2015).

A psychological contract is an informal obligation between the organisation and employee about their mutual expectations (Rousseau, 1989). Employees believe they will be rewarded for increased effort toward organisational goals (Kurtessis et al., 2015; Worley, Fuqua, & Hellman, 2009). If an employee believes this psychological contract has been breached and efforts have not been rewarded as expected, POS levels are likely to reduce, as are feelings of fairness and justice.

Although job demands are included in employees' appraisal of POS, it is the job resources that hold more importance in their appraisal and are a stronger predictor of POS (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Researchers believe this may be due to employees perceiving resources as discretionary whereas many demands are beyond the control of the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In addition, resources are valuable to employees and allow goals to be more readily achieved, thereby increasing their positive affective state and belief their organisation supports them.

High POS can benefit both the employee and the organisation. POS has a positive effect on employee performance (Jain, Giga, & Cooper, 2013) and increased performance shows an employees' commitment to the organisation (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS may be beneficial in both reducing role stress and the negative effects in circumstances where role

stress is unavoidable by providing employees with positive resources that enable better coping (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010). Psychological well-being increases in work environments that are supportive and there is a negative correlation between POS and stress (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010; Jain et al., 2013; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Specifically, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found higher levels of POS were associated with positive mood and reduced strain symptoms such as headaches, burnout and anxiety. Feeling valued may increase self-esteem (Edwards, 2009).

Organisational support may enable the employee to cope with negative behaviours (Quine, 1999) because effective policies provide targets with indications the organisation cares about them and will treat them fairly which reduces the negative effects experienced (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010). POS reduces the direct effects of organisational stressors on employee health and well-being and may be a useful organisational tool to reduce or prevent the negative consequences of stressors (Jain et al., 2013; Leather, Lawrence, Beale, Cox, & Dickson, 1998). Equally, low organisational support may contribute indirectly to the harm whereby the target feels the organisation does not value them, or believe them, or that the organisation is tolerant of negative behaviours. Perceptions of support in bullied employees are lower than for non-bullied employees (Bentley et al., 2009; Gardner et al., 2013). Experiencing an extreme social stressor such as workplace bullying, whilst feeling unsupported contributes to the harm. Van Heugten (2013) describe isolation as one of the most harmful outcomes of workplace bullying. This ostracism is both a bullying behaviour directed at the target and serves to erode the targets' resources.

POS provides employees with a supportive work environment where they feel valued and this is likely to motivate the employee to perform well. POS buffers the relationship between workplace bullying and job performance however this may be at a personal cost to the

employee. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2013) found performance declined with high levels of workplace bullying and low levels of POS however performance increased as levels of POS increased despite the bullying. Although these performance increases may be beneficial to the organisation these may be at a cost to the individuals' health and are unlikely to continue long term due to coping with bullying and performing well draining the targets' resources. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2013) suggest it is the obligation high POS creates that motivates the targeted employee to perform.

POS may be increased through supervisor behaviour, HR practices and top level leaders establishing a supportive culture within the organisation (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It is largely leaders' actions and behaviours from which perceptions of organisational support are formed (Van Schalkwyk, Els, & Rothmann Jr, 2011). Supervisors and leaders who model acceptable behaviours and encourage their employees to act ethically create a positive social exchange and influences employees' perceptions of the organisation (Brown et al., 2005). It follows that leaders exhibiting high moral values would increase perceptions of support. A supervisor's leadership style and perceived fairness from the supervisor towards employees may increase POS.

Workplace bullying targets who perceive low levels of support experienced greater negative effects than non-targets (Djurkovic et al., 2008). The lack of support received when bullied hinders the targets' ability to cope (Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie, & Einarsen, 2003). Further, after experiencing workplace bullying and receiving low levels of organisational support, targets become disengaged and their organisational commitment decreases (MacIntosh, O'Donnell, Wuest, & Merritt-Gray, 2011). Research on the moderating effects of POS on the impact of workplace violence show a negative relationship on job satisfaction and



organisational commitment (Leather et al., 1998) and intention to remain with the organisation (Colakoglu et al., 2010; Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

Therefore the present study expects POS to act as a moderator, whereby

Hypothesis 4: POS will moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and

- a. Strain
- b. Physical health symptoms
- c. Job performance
- d. Intentions to quit
- e. Absenteeism

Psychological capital

Psychological capital (PsyCap) has been defined as “an individual’s positive psychological state of development and is characterized by:

- (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks;
- (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future;
- (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and
- (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success” (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007, p. 3).

Self-efficacy is “believing in one’s ability to mobilize cognitive resources to obtain specific outcomes” (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 152). It is a cognitive state that describes one’s beliefs or expectations of how they can perform. This affects how individuals perceive situations thereby determining coping and stress responses and influences well-being. When faced with

challenging tasks or situations, individuals are more likely to perceive they have the ability to perform, will persist for longer when obstacles are encountered and exhibit less symptoms of stress if they have high levels of efficacy (Bandura, 1999). If individuals don't believe they can succeed they have little motivation to try. Luthans and Youssef (2004) assert that self-efficacy is positive for organisations whereas low self-efficacy is related to a susceptibility to the negative effects from destructive leadership (Luthans, Peterson, & Ibrayeva, 1998). In a workplace bullying situation a reciprocal process may arise in which workplace bullying erodes personal resources such as self-efficacy which gives rise to more susceptibility to destructive leadership and negative behaviours.

Optimism has been defined as "having the explanatory style that attributes positive events to internal, permanent and pervasive causes" (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 152). Optimists perform better at work, they work harder and for longer towards achieving goals than less optimistic people and can be more easily motivated to perform (Luthans & Church, 2002; Mache et al., 2014) and were happier and more satisfied (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Optimism predicts improved health (Lemola, Räikkönen, Gomez, & Allemand, 2013), particularly physical health symptoms (Khallad, 2013) and high optimism is associated with reduced suicide risk (Hirsch, Conner, & Duberstein, 2007).

Hope is described as "having the willpower and pathways to attain one's goals" (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 152). Hopeful people believe they are able to set goals, determine pathways to achieve the goal and self-motivate themselves to achieve the goal. Snyder (2000) assert hope provides a valuable buffer to protect people against uncertainty and in times of difficulty. Avey, Luthans, and Jensen (2009) believe hope to be a beneficial resource in times of stress at work. Furthermore, hope has been negatively associated with anxiety (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991) indicating an important role for hope in employee health and well-being.

Individuals with high levels of hope are beneficial to organisations as they are capable of planning alternative pathways to reach goals when faced with obstacles and have the motivation to succeed in reaching goals (Avey et al., 2009).

Resilience is “having the capacity to bounce back from adversity, failure or even seeming overwhelming positive changes” (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 152). Resilient employees are more likely to appraise events positively and when faced with a negative experience or stressor they are more emotionally stable (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Resilience may determine how individuals respond to and handle workplace stressors and therefore becomes a self-care resource and means of coping with stressors at work. Resilient employees are valuable for organisations as they are more easily motivated (Mache et al., 2014) and following adversity, their performance improves (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007) describe resilience as an essential resource to deal with negative workplace experiences as negative emotions and stressors are more readily dealt with. They conclude increased resilience improves well-being and resilient individuals are less vulnerable to adverse situations such as bullying.

Whilst each of PsyCap’s four factors individually influence people’s attitudes and behaviours, when combined they strengthen each other to become a higher order construct (Luthans et al., 2007). Luthans et al. (2007) believe PsyCap is a better predictor of performance and outcomes than its individual factors. For example, when an optimistic individual fails to reach a goal they are more likely to suffer more disappointment (Krizan, Miller, & Johar, 2010). However, hope, resilience and self-efficacy may provide them with the personal resources required to reassess and bounce back with a new plan to succeed and revive their future beliefs.

PsyCap provides organisations with a potential mechanism to improve performance, well-being and reduce turnover (Avey et al., 2009). Luthans et al. (2007) claim leaders high in PsyCap are more capable of motivating and developing their employees to achieve. Organisations benefit from developing PsyCap as it may be used to enable coping and as a stress management tool. Avey et al. (2009) found PsyCap partially mediated workplace stress on intentions to quit. Protecting employees from stress symptoms improves their well-being, job performance and reduces intentions to quit (Avey et al., 2009).

A positive belief for the future may provide a buffer against negative effects of work during demanding times and reduce associated emotional exhaustion (Jackson et al., 2007). Optimism and self-efficacy are therefore resources that buffer against job demands for targets of workplace bullying. These resources may reduce psychological harm and provide targets with more personal resources to effectively cope with the negative situations. When encountering negative behaviours at work, a bullying target high in optimism may be less inclined to attribute blame for the acts to themselves. In negative situations optimists are also more likely to adapt successfully due to having a higher level of persistence (Seligman, 1991). When workplace bullying erodes self-efficacy, targets' beliefs about the future are less positive and they may doubt their abilities and competency (Tuckey & Neall, 2014). Self-efficacy also acts as a buffer against the negative psychological effects of job demands such as workplace bullying (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004; Spence Laschinger & Nosko, 2013).

While research is scarce on the role psychological capital plays in workplace bullying, there are indications that it can support the positive reframing of problems, emphasise the positive aspects of their work environment, reduce self-blame and facilitate effective coping, thereby buffering the negative impacts of bullying (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Spence Laschinger and Nosko (2013) found targets of workplace bullying reported more PTSD symptoms than non-

targets however targets with higher levels of PsyCap reported fewer PTSD symptoms, indicating PsyCap buffers the negative impacts of bullying. The combined PsyCap factor was a better predictor of PTSD than the four factors individually however self-efficacy had the strongest influence. Spence Laschinger and Nosko (2013) conclude the higher levels of self-efficacy allow these targets to cope better with the bullying, reducing the negative consequences. Having confidence in oneself and one's abilities at work provides a buffer against bullying outcomes. High levels of optimism are positively related to health and well-being and when bullied, optimists are less likely to blame themselves. Resilient and self-efficacious employees cope better with stressors and strain, buffering the negative impacts of workplace bullying. Cassidy, McLaughlin, and McDowell (2014) agree PsyCap is an important personal resource for targets of workplace bullying. They found PsyCap influenced the relationship between workplace bullying and negative health outcomes by enhancing the targets well-being. The present study expects PsyCap to influence the relationship between workplace bullying and the negative impacts to employees' health and well-being and on the costs to the organisation. Thus,

Hypothesis 5: PsyCap will moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and

- a. Strain
- b. Physical health symptoms
- c. Job performance
- d. Intentions to quit
- e. Absenteeism

## Organisational and Individual Variables

Psychological strain and physical health symptoms

Psychological injury and impairment are costly health and safety issues for individuals and organisations. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe psychological stress as an interaction

“between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (p. 19). This definition highlights the importance of individuals' appraisal and coping processes which determine whether a situation results in stress. Stress can lead to psychological strain and physical health symptoms. The physiological responses to stressors can increase alertness and ready the body to respond to threats or challenges (Selye, 1974). These responses may be beneficial in the short term however chronic activation may be harmful to long term health and give rise to issues such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes and depression (Abraham et al., 2008). Stress can also influence the immune system, and psychologically stressed individuals are more at risk of respiratory illness (Kawakami & Haratani, 1999). Prior stressful experiences may have long term health implications and influence the perception and interpretation of future experiences. In addition to individual health problems, work stress has been associated with reduced organisational commitment, increased turnover and increased absenteeism (Sonnetag & Frese, 2003).

### Job performance

Job performance, how well an employee performs their work related tasks, is important for organisations to maximise profit and productivity, be competitive, and meet organisational goals (Devonish, 2013). Performing well provides employees with satisfaction, increases self-efficacy and may be associated with rewards such as promotion (Bandura, 2009). Motivation is critical because employees perform better when they are motivated to work harder (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011). Employee well-being is positively related to job performance (Wright & Huang, 2012) therefore the work environment and personal resources play an important role. Higher job performance has been associated with high levels of PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007) and leadership (Bandura, 2009), whereas decreased performance has been linked to stressful work environments (Colligan & Higgins, 2006). Workplace bullying that

criticises the targets' performance may result in doubt about one's abilities to perform and reduce self-evaluations, or the target may work harder to prove the bully wrong (Devonish, 2013).

#### Intentions to quit

Intentions to quit is an indicator of actual turnover however not all employees who would like to leave are able to or do so immediately due to economic factors, such as, the ability to find another job, family commitments or financial needs (Arnold & Feldman, 1982). Employee turnover is costly to organisations in terms of loss of skills and recruitment therefore committed employees are an asset to the organisation. Losing employees in specialised professions may be particularly detrimental, especially in small or geographically isolated businesses where replacement employees are not readily available.

The work environment and level of work-related stress experienced are related to employees' intentions to quit (Byoung-Kwon et al., 2016). An employee who perceives their workplace to be toxic is more likely to consider leaving. Intentions to quit is related to workplace bullying (Glambek et al., 2014; Quine, 1999) however, Hauge et al. (2010) found this accounted for a small percent of unique variance. Nevertheless, Van Schalkwyk et al. (2011) and Djurkovic et al. (2008) found lower levels of POS were related to increased intentions to quit when bullied indicating organisations need to increase support to targets to retain these employees.

Zheng, Yang, Ngo, Liu, and Jiao (2016) investigated the role of PsyCap between workplace ostracism (a specific type of bullying behaviour) and intentions to quit. They found ostracism at work was positively related to intentions to quit and PsyCap moderated the relationship.

## Absenteeism

Unofficial absences or absenteeism occur when an employee is intentionally absent from work. Absenteeism excludes official leave such as sick leave, annual leave or bereavement leave however, habitual sickness absences may be considered as absenteeism. Absenteeism is costly to organisations in terms of financial costs, productivity and the ability to perform required tasks. Workplace bullying targets may perceive unofficial absences from work as a legitimate avoidance strategy to cope with the negative consequences or to protect themselves from further bullying episodes. Absenteeism in order to avoid work or the workplace is more likely to be associated with short term absences whereas long term absences are more likely due to health issues (Ose, 2005). Absenteeism may be particularly detrimental in small businesses where the absence of even one employee may impact the ability to effectively run the business. Absences may be viewed negatively by the organisation or co-workers leading bullying targets to work at a cost to their health. Bullies may perceive their negative behaviour towards an absent employee as justified for the absences as they blame them for work conditions such as high workload. Targets may remain at work when they are attempting to cope which exacerbates the impact bullying has on their health and well-being. This may then become a perpetual cycle as the targets' health and coping ability declines, their behaviours and affective responses may change and the bullies' negative behaviours escalate.

Workplace bullying research has been associated with increased levels of long-term sickness absences in terms of frequency and duration (Nielsen, Indregard, & Øverland, 2016; Ortega, Christensen, Høgh, Rugulies, & Borg, 2011; Paludi, 2015). Nielsen et al. (2016) suggest sick leave may be used as a coping strategy. However, Ortega et al. (2011) believe rather than as an avoidance strategy, workplace bullying leads to physical and psychological health issues so it follows that sickness absences would increase as targets' health suffers.



## Chapter Three: Method

### Procedure

An online survey (Appendix A) using Qualtrics, a secure hosting site, was used to collect data. A link to the survey was distributed via the New Zealand Veterinary Association. It was not possible to determine the response rate as it was unknown how many received the survey link. To participate, individuals needed to be currently employed as a veterinarian within New Zealand.

Ethical approval was obtained through a Massey University Human Ethics Committee Low Risk Notification (Appendix B). Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Participants were provided with information on the purpose of the research, ethical approval, their rights and confidentiality.

### Participants

Respondents who were not practicing as veterinarians were excluded from the analysis. Two respondents were removed as they answered all questions at the low extreme after the initial screening questions. The final sample consisted of 198 participants, or 95.5 % of those who responded to the survey. Most participants (78 %) self-identified as New Zealand European, while 12 % identified as "Other European". Other ethnic categories were selected by two percent or less of participants. Sixty eight participants (34 %) were male and 121 participants (61 %) were female. Five percent did not provide gender information and were excluded from gender analyses. Ages ranged from 22 to 80 years ( $M= 45.22$  years,  $SD = 12.54$ ).

Participants' tenure in their current position ranged from one month to 36 years ( $M = 8.87$  years,  $SD = 8.03$  years), while tenure in their current organisation ranged from less than one month to 36 years ( $M = 10.32$  years,  $SD = 8.82$  years). Fifty percent of participants had been working in their current organisation for seven years or less, while 12% had been working in their current organisation for 20 years or more.

Participants indicated their role within their organisation. Fifty six percent of participants identified as non-managerial employees. Four percent of participants were first-line supervisors, 11% were mid-level managers and 22% were senior managers or executives. These three managerial categories were combined into a 'manager' role category. Seven percent did not provide their role and were excluded from the role analysis. Role was dummy coded (0 = manager, 1 = non-manager) and the dummy coded variable was used in analyses.

## Measures

### Workplace bullying

Negative behaviours at work were measured utilising the Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R) (Einarsen et al., 2009). The NAQ-R does not rely on participants' belief that they have been bullied and was presented to them prior to the provision of any mention or definition of bullying. The NAQ-R is a 22 item questionnaire asking participants to indicate how often they have encountered various behaviours over the last six months on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = "Never", 2 = "Now and then", 3 = "Monthly", 4 = "Weekly" and 5 = "Daily"). Participants answered questions relating to how often they had experienced negative acts such as "Someone withholding information which affects your performance", "Being ignored or excluded" and "Persistent criticism of your work and effort". The NAQ-R measure is comprised of items relating to work-related, person-related and physical workplace bullying behaviours. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .90 and Bartlett's test

of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified four factors with initial eigenvalues greater than 1, totalling 65% of the variance. The first factor accounted for 44% of the variance, a second factor for a further 10% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component and a smaller break after the second component. This result was not unexpected as workplace bullying is complex and comprised of a range of negative behaviours therefore a single scale was computed as the mean of all variables. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .93$ .

Participants were also categorised as bullied or non-bullied. Participants were classified as bullied if they had experienced two or more negative acts weekly or daily over the past 6 months. Participants who did not meet this criteria were classified as non-bullied.

#### Destructive leadership

Destructive leadership was measured using a 20 item scale adapted from Shaw et al. (2011). Participants were asked how often their immediate supervisor did a range of behaviours such as "My boss holds grudges". Participants answered questions on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = "Never"; 5 = "Always"). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .91 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified four factors with initial eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for 68% of the variance. The first factor accounted for 46% of the variance, and the second factor accounted for a further 9% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component, therefore a single scale was computed from the mean of all items. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .93$ .

### Team Conflict

Team conflict was measured using Jehn's (1995) 8 item scale. Participants were asked about social interactions in their workgroup. Four questions related to relationship conflicts such as "There is tension among members in my work unit" and four questions related to task conflict such as "There are conflicts about ideas in my work unit". Participants rated each item on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = "Never"; 5 = "Always"). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .94 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified a single factor accounting for 75% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component. A scale score was computed from the mean of the items. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .95$ .

### Perceived organisational support

Perceived organisational support was measured using 7 items adapted from Djurkovic et al. (2008). Participants rated items such as "My organisation really cares about my wellbeing" and "My organisation takes pride in my accomplishments at work" on a 7-point Likert scale (1= "Strongly disagree"; 7 = "Strongly agree"). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .91 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified a single factor accounting for 79% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component. A scale score was computed from the mean of the items. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .96$ .

### Psychological capital

Psychological capital was measured using 12 items from Luthans et al. (2007). Three items related to self-efficacy (e.g. "I feel confident representing my work area in meetings with management"), 4 items related to hope (e.g. "I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals"), 3 items related to resilience (e.g. "I usually take stressful things at work in

stride”), and 2 items related to optimism (e.g. “I always look on the bright side of life”).

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item on a 6 point Likert scale (1 = “Strongly disagree”; 6 “Strongly disagree”). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .78 and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified a single factor accounting for 50% of the variance, and a second factor accounted for a further 13% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component. A single scale was computed from the mean of all items. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .91$

#### Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership was measured using a 10 item scale (Brown et al., 2005). Participants were asked about the behaviour of their immediate supervisor e.g. “My boss listens to what employees have to say” on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = “Never”; 5 = “Always”). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .88 and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified a single factor accounting for 51% of the variance. A second factor with an initial eigenvalue greater than one accounted for a further 11% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component, therefore a single scale was computed from all items. The mean score from all items was computed for each participant. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .88$ .

#### Strain

Strain was measured using Goldberg’s (1972) 12 item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). Participants indicated to what extent they had experienced each item over the past 6 months, e.g. “Felt you couldn’t overcome your difficulties” and “Lost much sleep over worry”. Participants rated each item on a 4 point Likert scale (1 = “Not at all”; 4 = “Much more than usual”). The GHQ-12 measures positive and negative aspects of psychological health. The

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .87 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified two components contributing to 59% of the variance. Six items describing negative aspects of psychological health (i.e. strain) loaded on Component 1 and explained 41% of the variance while 6 items describing positive aspects of psychological health loaded on Component 2 and explained 18% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the second component. The factor analysis results supported the use of positive and negative items as separate scale items. The 6 items measuring positive aspects of psychological health were removed to compute a measure of strain and the mean score of the 6 strain items was calculated so that higher scores indicated more strain. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .90$ .

#### Physical health symptoms

Physical health symptoms were measured with a 13 item scale adapted from Spector and Jex (1998). Participants were asked how often they had experienced various symptoms over the past 6 months such as "An upset stomach or nausea". Participants rated each item using a 5 point Likert scale (1 = "Less than once per month or never"; 5 = "Several times per day"). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .79 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified four factors with initial eigenvalues greater than 1, totalling 59% of the variance. The first factor accounted for 30% of the variance, and a second factor accounted for a further 12% of the variance. Inspection of the scree plot identified a clear break after the first component. A single scale was computed as physical health is comprised of a range of physical symptoms and the mean score was obtained. A higher mean score indicated the participant experienced more health symptoms and worse physical health. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .78$ .

### Self-rated job performance

Participants were asked to rate their overall job performance over the last 6 months (Kessler et al., 2003). A ten point scale was provided and to help participants assess performance, descriptions were provided (such as, 1 = “the worse performance anyone could have at your job”, 5 to 6 = “average level of performance”, and 10 = “the performance of a top worker”).

### Intentions to quit

Three questions asking participants about how they felt about their present job measured intentions to quit (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). First, participants were asked if they had thought about quitting this job on a 6 point scale (1 = “Never”; 6 = “All the time”). Second, participants were asked if they planned to look for a new job within the next 12 months (1 = “Strongly disagree”; 6 = “Strongly agree”). Third, participants were asked whether, over the next year, they felt they would actively look for a new job outside their current organisation (1 = “Very unlikely”; 6 = “Very likely”). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .66 and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant. Principal component analysis identified a single factor accounting for 82% of the variance. A scale score was computed from the mean of the items. The scale reliability was  $\alpha = .89$ .

### Absenteeism

Absenteeism was measured with a single item (Bentley & Thomas, 2009) asking how often participants estimated they had been unofficially absent from work in the past 6 months on a 5 point Likert scale (0 = “0 days”, 1 = “1-2 days”, 3 = “3-5 days”, 4 = “More than 10 days”).

Participants were given examples of official absence types not to include, for example annual leave.

## Data analysis

Physical health symptoms were positively skewed, indicating that participants tended to report good physical health. POS was negatively skewed. Normality checks showed that the NAQ-R was negatively skewed however this was not unexpected. Regressions were run with transformed and non-transformed data with no differences in the results, therefore analysis using non-transformed data are reported.

Data were analysed using SPSS Statistics 22. Analysis included descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations using Pearson's Correlation Coefficients. Between-group comparisons were calculated using independent t-tests.

Multiple regression analyses testing moderation and mediation were conducted using Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures. Regression analyses were initially run with gender and role as control variables. Non-significant control variables were removed, regression analyses repeated and these results reported.

The mediating effects of workplace bullying was tested using three steps. Step one established a relationship between the independent variable (e.g. team conflict) and dependent variable (e.g. strain). The second step established the relationship between the mediator (workplace bullying) and the independent variable. Mediation was tested in the third step by regressing the dependent variable on the mediator and independent variable together. Baron and Kenny (1986) claim full mediation occurs when the significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable established in step one becomes non-significant in the third step. Partial mediation occurs when the regression remains significant but reduces in magnitude. Sobel tests were calculated to examine whether the mediation was statistically significant.



Moderation was tested with centred independent variables and centred moderator variables. A two-step regression analysis process tested for linear and moderator effects. The first step tested for linear effects between the centred independent variable (workplace bullying), the centred moderators (e.g. POS) and the dependent variables (e.g. strain). Interaction terms were calculated by multiplying the centred independent variable with each centred moderator variable. In the second step of the regression analyses, the interaction term was added.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Demographic differences

Female participants were bullied more, had lower psychological capital, more strain and rated their self-rated job performance lower than male participants (Table 2). Female participants' tenure in position and tenure in organisation was shorter than male participants. Due to these significant differences between male and female participants, gender was included in regression analyses as a control variable.

Table 2. Differences between male and female participants

Variables	Male		Female		t	df	eta <sup>2</sup>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Workplace bullying	1.28	.35	1.47	.53	-2.48*	186	.03
Team conflict	2.29	.88	2.51	.81	-1.78	186	.02
Destructive leadership	1.96	.71	1.95	.70	-.12	173	.00
POS	5.27	1.75	4.91	1.50	1.02	186	.00
PsyCap	4.91	.65	4.47	.80	3.79***	185	.07
Ethical leadership	3.66	.87	3.56	.77	.83	173	.00
Strain	1.96	.68	2.26	.72	-2.84**	187	.04
Physical health symptoms	1.65	.44	1.75	.47	-1.46	185	.01
Job performance	7.95	1.15	7.40	1.32	2.85**	183	.04
Intentions to quit	2.43	1.49	2.81	1.48	-1.66	186	.02
Absenteeism	.11	.31	.08	.36	.45	185	.00
Tenure in position	11.95	8.93	7.16	6.95	4.08***	186	.08
Tenure in organisation	14.12	9.49	8.22	7.70	4.63***	186	.10

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001.

Compared to non-managers, managers reported experiencing less workplace bullying, team conflict, destructive leadership, and strain than non-managers (Table 3) and higher levels of

POS, PsyCap, physical health symptoms and ethical leadership. Role (manager/non-manager) was included in the regression analyses as a control variable.

Table 3. Differences between managers and non-managers

Variables	Manager		Non-manager		t	df	eta <sup>2</sup>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Workplace bullying	1.28	.33	1.48	.54	-2.85**	180	.04
Team conflict	2.21	.74	2.60	.85	-3.23***	180	.06
Destructive leadership	1.69	.54	2.10	.75	-3.84***	168	.08
POS	5.71	1.40	4.71	1.56	4.43***	180	.10
PsyCap	5.02	.60	4.37	.77	6.06***	179	.17
Ethical leadership	3.88	.75	3.43	.80	3.62***	168	.07
Strain	2.00	.64	2.27	.76	-2.52**	181	.03
Physical health symptoms	1.57	.43	1.81	.46	-3.51***	179	.06
Job performance	7.97	1.15	7.30	1.31	3.52***	178	.07
Intentions to quit	2.23	1.33	2.97	1.54	-3.26***	180	.06
Absenteeism	.07	.25	.11	.39	-.80	180	.00
Tenure in position	11.16	9.07	7.15	6.78	3.40***	180	.06
Tenure in organisation	13.74	9.39	8.01	7.65	4.52***	180	.10

\*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

### Bivariate correlations

Correlation analyses are presented in Table 2 along with means and standard deviations.

Workplace bullying related to lower levels of POS, PsyCap and self-rated job performance and higher levels of team conflict, destructive leadership and intentions to quit. In terms of health and well-being, higher levels of workplace bullying were related to higher levels of strain and more physical health symptoms.

POS was strongly related to leadership behaviour – negatively with destructive leadership and positively with ethical leadership. Higher levels of POS were associated with less team conflict,

absenteeism, intentions to quit, strain and physical health symptoms. PsyCap levels were better in participants with high levels of POS.

Work environments with high levels of team conflict and destructive leadership resulted in worse physical health symptoms and more strain. Participants experiencing more strain and more physical health symptoms had lower levels of personal and organisational resources, rated their performance lower and were more likely to intend to quit.

The longer a participant spent in their position or organisation, the less likely they were to experience workplace bullying. They were more likely to rate their self-rated job performance and levels of PsyCap higher than those with shorter tenure. Perceptions about leadership were not associated with tenure.

Age was significantly related to all study variables except destructive leadership and absenteeism. Younger participants experienced more workplace bullying and team conflict. Less strain and physical health symptoms were reported by older participants. POS and PsyCap increased with age. Older participants rated their self-rated job performance higher and leadership as more ethical. Tenure in position and tenure in organisation were strongly, positively related to age and intentions to quit were lower for older participants. As age was confounded with role, the role variable was used as a control variable.

Table 4. Bivariate correlations, means and standard deviations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Workplace bullying	1													
2. Team Conflict	.57**	1												
3. Destructive leadership	.53**	.47**	1											
4. POS	-.53**	-.47**	-.65**	1										
5. Psychological capital	-.36**	-.42**	-.43**	.52**	1									
6. Ethical leadership	-.44**	-.38**	-.67**	.68**	.47**	1								
7. Strain	.54**	.46**	.41**	-.37**	-.48**	-.42**	1							
8. Physical health symptoms	.44**	.37**	.29**	-.40**	-.39**	-.31**	.60**	1						
9. Job performance	-.17*	-.27**	-.16*	.19*	.57**	.17*	-.42**	-.27**	1					
10. Intentions to quit	.47**	.39**	.41**	-.50**	-.46**	-.39**	.54**	.37**	-.29**	1				
11. Absenteeism	.01	.10	.02	-.16*	-.22**	-.11	-.02	.07	-.18*	.10	1			
12. Tenure in position	-.15*	-.11	-.04	.08	.21**	.13	-.19*	-.12	.15*	-.18*	.03	1		
13. Tenure in organisation	-.18*	-.14	-.02	.12	.24**	.15	-.23**	-.14	.21**	-.22**	.00	.82**	1	
14. Age	-.17*	-.21**	-.07	.20**	.42**	.24**	-.39**	-.21**	.34**	-.31**	.04	.58**	.63**	1
Mean	1.4	2.42	1.96	5.13	4.62	3.60	2.14	1.72	7.60	2.66	.09	8.87	10.32	45.22
SD	.48	.83	.70	1.59	.81	.81	.71	.45	1.33	1.48	.34	8.03	8.82	12.54

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

## Workplace bullying

Thirty two (16%) participants were bullied using the criterion of having experienced two or more negative acts weekly or daily over the past 6 months. The most frequently endorsed NAQ-R item was “being exposed to an unmanageable workload” (Table 3). Whilst being given too much work in itself is not necessarily bullying, participants were only classified as bullied if they had experienced two or more negative acts weekly or daily over the past 6 months.

Other highly endorsed items clearly do constitute workplace bullying such as being ignored or excluded.

Table 5. Mean score of Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised items

NAQ-R Item	Mean
Being exposed to unmanageable workload	1.94
Having opinions ignored	1.91
Information being withheld which affects performance	1.80
Being ignored or excluded	1.65
Being ordered to work below level of competence	1.54
Being given unreasonable deadlines	1.45
Being excessively monitoring	1.42
Having gossip or rumours spread about you	1.40
Being humiliated or ridiculed	1.39
Being ignored or hostile reaction when approach	1.39
Having key responsibilities removed or replaced with lesser tasks	1.36
Having repeated reminders of errors/mistakes	1.36
Being pressure not to claim entitlements	1.36
Having persistent criticism	1.35
Being shouted at	1.31
Receiving insulting or offensive remarks	1.29
Having allegations made against	1.24
Receiving hints or signals to quit job	1.16
Receiving intimidating behaviour	1.13
Receiving excessive teasing and sarcasm	1.11
Having practical jokes made by people don't get along with	1.05
Having threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	1.03

## Hypothesis testing

Regression analyses were initially run with gender and role as control variables. Gender was non-significant for all mediation regression analyses. Role was significant in the relationships between team conflict and physical health symptoms, self-rated job performance and destructive leadership and physical health symptoms and these results reported. Role was dummy coded (0 = manager, 1 = non-manager).

Destructive leadership was related to more reported strain. This relationship was partially mediated by workplace bullying, supporting hypothesis 1a (Table 6). Role did not have a significant effect.

Table 6. Workplace bullying as mediator between destructive leadership and strain (hypothesis 1a)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Strain	Destructive leadership	.41	.07	.41***	.16	.16	
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Destructive leadership	.36	.04	.53***	.28	.27	
Step 3	Strain	Destructive leadership	.17	.07	.17*	.31	.31	6.09***
		Workplace bullying	.68	.11	.45***			

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

More destructive leadership was associated with more reported physical health symptoms.

This relationship was fully mediated by workplace bullying, supporting hypothesis 1b (Table 7).

There was an additional effect of role, in that non-managers reported more physical health symptoms than managers.

Table 7. Workplace bullying as mediator between destructive leadership and physical health symptoms (hypothesis 1b)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Physical health symptoms	Role	.17	.07	.19*	.12	.10	
		Destructive leadership	.15	.05	.23**			
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Role	.06	.07	.06	.28	.27	
		Destructive leadership	.34	.05	.51***			
Step 3	Physical health symptoms	Role	.15	.07	.16*	.22	.21	4.63***
		Destructive leadership	.03	.05	.04			
		Workplace bullying	.37	.08	.38***			

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

Hypothesis 1d proposed that workplace bullying would mediate the relationship between destructive leadership and intentions to quit. This hypothesis was partially supported as the significant relationship between destructive leadership and intentions to quit was reduced by the addition of workplace bullying as mediator (Table 8).

Table 8. Workplace bullying as mediator between destructive leadership and intentions to quit (hypothesis 1d)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Intentions to quit	Destructive leadership	.86	.14	.41***	.17	.16	
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Destructive leadership	.36	.04	.53***	.28	.27	
Step 3	Intentions to quit	Destructive leadership	.46	.16	.22**	.26	.25	5.55***
		Workplace bullying	1.12	.24	.36***			

\*\* p<.001, \*\*\* p<.001

Hypotheses 1c and 1e were not supported. Workplace bullying did not mediate the relationship between destructive leadership and self-rated job performance or absenteeism. The relationship between destructive leadership and the dependent variables were not significant at step 1 therefore there was no relationship to mediate.



Team conflict was related to more reported strain. This relationship was partially mediated by workplace bullying, supporting hypothesis 2a (Table 9).

Table 9. Workplace bullying as mediator between team conflict and strain (hypothesis 2a)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Strain	Team conflict	.40	.06	.46***	.21	.21	
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Team conflict	.33	.03	.57***	.33	.32	
Step 3	Strain	Team conflict	.19	.06	.22**	.33	.32	6.59***
		Workplace bullying	.62	.11	.42***			

\*\* p<.001, \*\*\* p<.001

Team conflict was also related to more reported physical health symptoms. Workplace bullying fully mediated this relationship, supporting hypothesis 2b (Table 10). Role played a significant effect in that non-managers reported more physical health symptoms than managers.

Table 10. Workplace bullying as mediator between team conflict and physical health symptoms (hypothesis 2b)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Physical health symptoms	Role	.16	.07	.18*			
		Team conflict	.18	.04	.33***	.17	.16	
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Role	.08	.06	.08			
		Team conflict	.32	.04	.56***	.33	.32	
Step 3	Physical health symptoms	Role	.14	.06	.15*			
		Team conflict	.08	.04	.15			
		Workplace bullying	.30	.08	.32***	.24	.22	4.91***

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

Team conflict was related to lower self-rated job performance. This relationship was partially mediated by workplace bullying (Table 11). The Sobel test result indicated the relationship was not significant therefore hypothesis 2c was not supported.

Table 11. Workplace bullying as mediator between team conflict and self-rated job performance (hypothesis 2c)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Job performance	Role	-.55	.20	-.20**	.11	.10	
		Team conflict	-.36	.12	-.22**			
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Role	.08	.06	.08	.33	.32	
		Team conflict	.32	.04	.55***			
Step 3	Job performance	Role	-.55	.20	-.20**	.11	.10	-1.63
		Team conflict	-.36	.14	-.22*			
		Workplace bullying	-.01	.24	-.00			

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

More team conflict was related to more intentions to quit. Hypothesis 2d was supported as workplace bullying partially mediated the relationship between team conflict and intentions to quit (Table 12).

Table 12. Workplace bullying as mediator between team conflict and intentions to quit (hypothesis 2d)

	DV	IV	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Sobel z
Step 1	Intention to quit	Team conflict	.71	.12	.39***	.16	.15	
Step 2	Workplace bullying	Team conflict	.03	.57	.33***	.33	.32	
Step 3	Intention to quit	Team conflict	.33	.14	.18*	.25	.24	5.92***
		Workplace bullying	1.15	.24	.37***			

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

Hypothesis 2e was not supported as workplace bullying did not mediate the relationship between team conflict and absenteeism.

Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 predicted that the negative effects of workplace bullying on personal and organisational variables would be moderated by personal resources (PsyCap) and organisational resources (POS and ethical leadership). Gender was non-significant for all moderation regression analyses therefore gender was removed, regression analyses repeated and these results are reported. Role was significant in the relationships between POS and job

performance and ethical leadership and job performance and these results are reported. Role was removed, regression analyses repeated and these result are reported for the remaining analyses where role was non-significant.

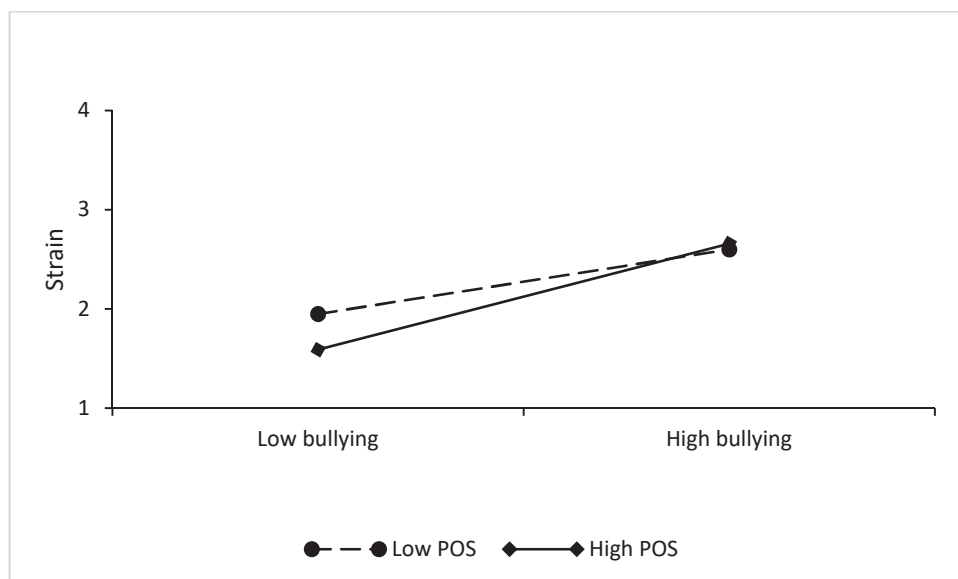
Hypothesis 3a was supported as POS moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and strain (Table 13 and Figure 2). This relationship was stronger for high levels of POS than for low levels of POS. Participants with high levels of POS had the lowest levels of strain when workplace bullying was low. POS partially buffered the effects of workplace bullying on strain when bullying levels are low however not when bullying levels were high.

Table 13. POS as moderator between workplace bullying and strain (hypothesis 3a) and job performance (hypothesis 3c)

	DV	IV	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F (df1, df2)
H3a	Strain	POS	-.05	.03	-.11			
		Workplace bullying	.90	.13	.60***			
		POS X Workplace bullying	.14	.06	.18*	.32	.31	30.30*** (3, 192)
H3c	Job Performance	Role	-.58	.21	-.21**	.07	.06	12.37*** (1, 178)
		POS	.05	.07	.06			
		Workplace bullying	-.64	.29	-.23*			
		POS X Workplace bullying	-.31	.14	-.21*	.11	.09	5.34*** (4, 175)

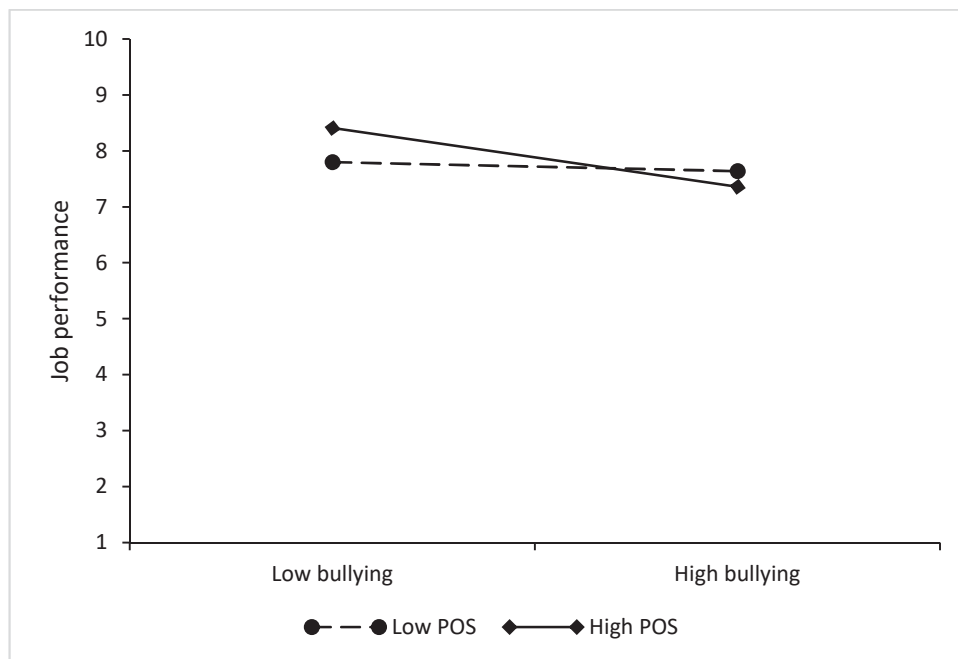
\* p<.05, \*\* p<.001, \*\*\* p<.001

Figure 2. Moderation by POS of workplace bullying and strain (hypothesis 3a)



Hypothesis 3c proposed POS would moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and self-reported job performance and this was supported (Table 13). Figure 3 shows that self-reported job performance was highest for employees with high levels of POS when bullying was low. However in workplace environments with high levels of bullying, the level of POS has a weaker influence on self-rated job performance.

Figure 3. Moderation by POS of workplace bullying and job performance (hypothesis 3c)



POS did not moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and physical health symptoms (hypothesis 3b), intentions to quit (hypothesis 3d) and absenteeism (hypothesis 3e). These hypotheses were not supported.

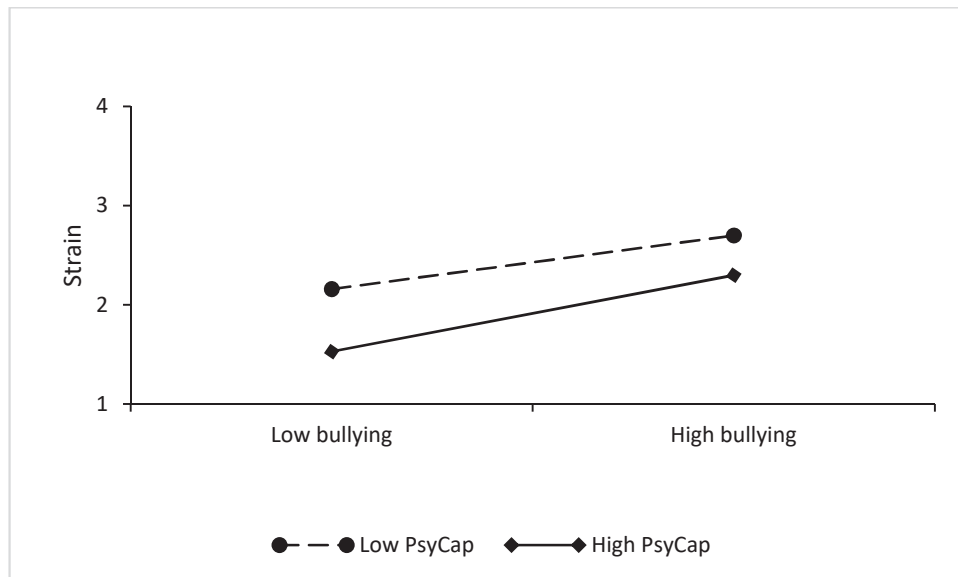
Hypothesis 4a was supported. There was a positive relationship between workplace bullying and reported strain (Table 14 and Figure 4). Participants with high levels of PsyCap overall had lower levels of strain. The effects of PsyCap were slightly stronger at low levels of workplace bullying than high levels of workplace bullying.

Table 14. PsyCap as moderator between workplace bullying and strain (hypothesis 4a)

DV	IV	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F (df1, df2)
H4a	Strain	PsyCap	-.33	.06	-.36***		
		Workplace bullying	.68	.09	.45***		
		PsyCap X Workplace bullying	.16	.08	.12*	.40	.39

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

Figure 4. Moderation by PsyCap of workplace bullying and strain (hypothesis 4a)



PsyCap did not moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and physical health symptoms (hypothesis 4b), job performance (hypothesis 4c), intentions to quit (hypothesis 4d) and absenteeism (hypothesis 4e). The interaction effects were not significant therefore these hypotheses were not supported.

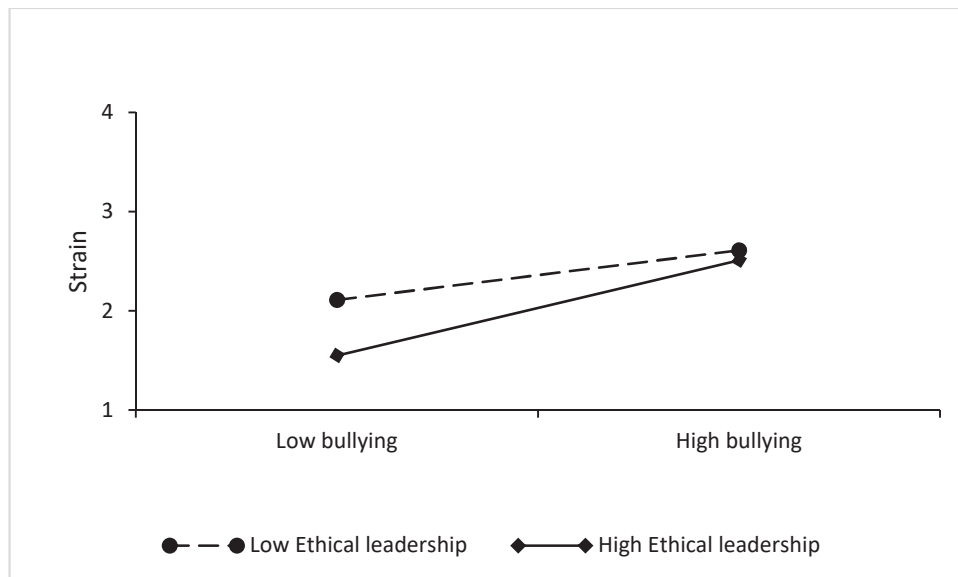
Hypothesis 5a was supported as ethical leadership moderated the relationship between workplace bullying and strain (Table 15 and Figure 5). At high levels of ethical leadership the relationship between workplace bullying and strain was stronger than at low levels of ethical leadership.

Table 15. Ethical leadership as moderator between workplace bullying and strain (hypothesis 5a) and job performance (hypothesis 5c)

DV	IV	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F (df1, df2)
H5a Strain	Ethical leadership	-.21	.06	.23***			
	Workplace bullying	.76	.11	.50***			
	Ethical leadership X Workplace bullying	.30	.13	.16*	.35	.34	32.11*** (3, 177)
H5c Job Performance	Role	-.61	.21	-.23**	.07	.06	11.61*** (1, 167)
	Ethical leadership	.15	.14	.09			
	Workplace bullying	-.47	.25	-.17*			
	Ethical leadership X Workplace bullying	-.74	.29	-.21*	.12	.10	5.52*** (4, 164)

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

Figure 5. Moderation by ethical leadership of workplace bullying and strain (hypothesis 5a)



Hypothesis 5c was supported. Self-rated job performance was highest for employees with high levels of ethical leadership when workplace bullying was low however this relationship was weaker when bullying levels are high (Table 15 and Figure 6). Role also remained significant in that non-managers reported lower levels of ethical leadership than managers.

Figure 6. Moderation by ethical leadership of workplace bullying and job performance (hypothesis 5c)



Ethical leadership did not moderate the relationship between workplace bullying and physical health symptoms (hypothesis 5b), intentions to quit (hypothesis 5d) and absenteeism (hypothesis 5e). These hypotheses were not supported.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The results found that 16% of participants met the criteria for having been bullied, indicating that workplace bullying was relatively prevalent amongst this sample of New Zealand veterinarians. Research has found workplace bullying prevalence rates vary however this study was in line with the rates found in other New Zealand samples, particularly in the healthcare sector (Bentley & Thomas, 2009). The importance of the work environment was reinforced by the results of this study. Workplace bullying partially mediated the relationship between destructive leadership and team conflict and strain, intentions to quit and physical health symptoms. This implies, first that these negative workplace conditions may allow bullying to flourish and second, as it is only partial mediation, that destructive leadership and team conflict have direct negative effects on employees in themselves, whether or not bullying is involved. Positive workplace conditions (ethical leadership and perceived organisational support) and personal resources (psychological capital) reduced the effects of workplace bullying on strain and self-reported job performance, but the moderated effects were small, and these positive factors did not buffer the effects of bullying on intentions to quit, absenteeism or physical health. The positive workplace conditions and personal resources were, however, directly related to reduced strain, better self-rated job performance, lower intentions to quit, better physical health and reduced absenteeism.

Destructive leadership and team conflict may foster workplace bullying and create a toxic work environment. Toxic work environments, where neither leadership nor team relationships are working, are likely to manifest in workplace bullying which in turn is likely to severely impact the employees and organisation. Whilst it was expected team conflict and destructive leadership would have direct relationships with strain, physical health symptoms, self-rated job performance, intentions to quit and absenteeism, workplace bullying was expected to play



a greater role as mediator of these relationships. Destructive leadership is highly correlated with workplace bullying and some of its variance may have been absorbed by workplace bullying. The behaviours of the destructive leader may be seen as bullying behaviour, therefore workplace bullying may not be acting as a full mediator as they are conceptually so strongly related. Destructive leadership and team conflict are both negative demands in their own right. Negative workplace environments are likely to have worse outcomes regardless of workplace bullying therefore it is vital to fix the environment rather than focus exclusively on the bullying behaviours or attempt to change the targets' response.

Workplace bullying was strongly related to work conditions. In particular, workplace bullying related to job resources more strongly than personal resources and high levels of destructive leadership and team conflict related to job resources more strongly than personal resources. This is consistent with Roche et al. (2016) where, although they found personal and organisational resources declined over time, it was more prominent for organisational resources. Further, they believe targets develop a global belief their organisation is to blame for not doing something about the bullying therefore they rate their leaders and organisation more negatively.

Workplace bullying partially mediated the relationship between destructive leadership and team conflict and intentions to quit. Higher levels of workplace bullying were associated with increased intentions to quit. If an employee is in a negative environment they are more inclined to consider leaving. However, as intention to quit is a prospective state of mind, while the employee is contemplating their intentions they remain in the workplace and this is of concern for organisations as the employees' performance may decline. Whist research has found intentions to quit are influenced by POS (Haar, De Fluiter, & Brougham, 2016; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2011), PsyCap (Zheng et al., 2016), and ethical

leadership (Babalola et al., 2016) this study did not support these findings in the context of workplace bullying. It is possible that once workplace bullying took hold, personal and organisational resources were unable to buffer the effects and leaving was seen as the best option to resolve the situation.

While psychological capital was negatively related to strain, absenteeism and physical health symptoms, and positively related to self-rated job performance, its role as a buffer against workplace bullying was limited. This is consistent with the findings of Bentley and Thomas (2009) who concluded that the work environment plays a stronger role than individual characteristics in reducing workplace bullying. Expecting targets to build their personal resources in order to better cope with the bullying is ultimately an ineffective strategy.

Although in the short term personal resources may help targets through, for example, building adaptive modes of dealing with stressors and demands, over time bullying wears out the target. Psychological capital may help explain why employees differ in their perception of stressful situations and it may help combat some of the negative emotional effects of bullying. However, changes to organisational structures and culture, including the adoption of policies and practices which support employees, are more likely to be more effective in preventing and addressing workplace bullying.

Work characteristics are important antecedents of workplace bullying and organisational resources may reduce or prevent bullying. Firstly, through good leadership as leaders can enact policies and provide role models. Ethical leaders have good communication, robust decision-making and influence employees. Secondly, organisations can provide support to bullying targets. Although POS had both a direct effect and buffering role with workplace bullying, the findings were somewhat surprising. Targets with more organisational resources to deal with workplace bullying have been found to experience less negative effects (Tuckey &

Neall, 2014). However POS had a weaker influence on strain and job performance when workplace bullying levels were high. When there are high levels of workplace bullying it would follow that employees with more resources, such as high levels of POS, would draw on these and cope better. Employees with high levels of POS may have higher expectations that their organisation would not allow bullying to occur and if it did then it would be effectively managed, therefore the impact was more intense for these employees. Whilst high levels of POS are desirable for organisations, a more holistic approach to the work environment is required as POS does not work in isolation. In demanding work environments, high levels of POS may be detrimental. An employee may strongly believe their organisation is supportive and feel so obliged to reciprocate to the organisation, they do so at a personal cost. Workplace bullying is such an insidious experience the illusion of support may eventually be destroyed. This may flow into costs to the organisation such as reduced job performance. Therefore other aspects of the work environment such as leadership must be considered.

Role was important whereby managers were less likely to report experiencing negative acts at work, and rated their job performance higher, than non-managers. This is likely to result in differing perceptions about the work environment which is key to showing why leadership matters within an organisation. Leaders act as agents or representatives of the organisation, are in a position of power over their employees, are role models and are a conduit of information from higher levels of management to employees and are therefore influential on employee behaviours and attitudes. However, if leaders are unable to understand how their actions are perceived by employees, or do not share the same beliefs about, or experiences of, the work environment, then they are less likely to be a positive influence or to understand what their employees need.

The different perceptions about leadership found between managers and non-managers is worthy of further investigation. To reduce the risk of workplace bullying, and to provide employees with an ethical and supportive workplace, managers need to be aware that the perception their employees hold of the organisation may differ from their own. Leaders can influence the work environment through the behaviours they condone or address. Leaders' initiatives aimed at fostering a positive work environment may not be perceived by employees in the same way as by the leaders themselves, particularly in less favourable work environments.

In large organisations where much organisational research to date has been conducted, a 'leader' can be very removed from employees' day to day work. However, in small businesses, leaders work more closely with employees in their daily work tasks. Most veterinary practices are small businesses, in which leadership is not necessarily about 'top-level' organisational leaders but about employees' immediate managers or supervisors. In many cases, small business owners may be expert practitioners in their field but may lack the skills and knowledge characteristic of leadership. There is limited research on workplace bullying in small businesses, but it is likely that its impacts on employees and the organisation may be intensified, as bullying behaviours would be more apparent and targets would have limited opportunities to avoid interactions, and there would be potentially fewer resources available (e.g. no HR department), to manage the issue. It is essential that small business owners develop the necessary skills to be ethical leaders.

Workplace bullying is a very potent stressor and resources were not able to buffer all of its harmful effects. Resources are beneficial as they create a positive work environment where bullying is less likely to develop and if it does occur it is more likely to be effectively dealt with. Ethical leaders are more likely to identify issues and actively address them, holding

accountable those that need to be. So whilst resources may not be as beneficial as hypothesised, they still provide important protection. Destructive leadership may be more powerful than ethical leadership. Team conflict may be more detrimental than the positive influence of POS. That is, the negative conditions may outweigh the positive conditions. Similarly, Roche et al. (2016) warn once workplace bullying develops within an organisation it may be too late to effectively manage it as “bad is stronger than good”.

Understanding resources that mitigate the impact of workplace stressors can help organisations improve psychological wellbeing at work which otherwise may be a costly health and safety issue. The negative effects associated with workplace bullying and toxic work environments should spur organisations to act immediately and remedy these issues.

Organisations are obliged to provide a safe work environment for their employees. The HSWA (Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015) and WorkSafe New Zealand Best Practice Guidelines (WorkSafe New Zealand, 2014) clearly identifies potential risk from the work environment as an issue for organisations to address. However, Bentley and Thomas (2009) believe New Zealand managers may lack the necessary understanding to effectively develop bully-free workplaces and despite much research on interventions, effective strategies are yet to be identified. In another New Zealand study, Catley et al. (2013) report the majority of participants believed their organisation was ill-equipped to effectively manage workplace bullying and less than one third have an adequate understanding of what are acceptable behaviours. WorkSafe provide tools and advice to assist organisations in developing positive workplaces, effective leaders and a values-based culture and it would be remiss of organisations not to take up these resources.

## Practical implications

If workplace bullying occurs it is important that the organisation acts upon it as, if there are no consequences, bullying may become entrenched. Whilst research indicates there is not a simple explanation to the antecedents of workplace bullying, this study supports a growing body of literature that implicates the work environment as a key factor. It is important to understand the antecedents of bullying to develop effective interventions and have effective leadership to implement them.

Business management and leadership skills are vital for veterinarians' professional career. With many small veterinary practices, it follows that a high number of veterinarians will become leaders and managers in their professional career. Having one training provider for all New Zealand trained veterinarians provides an opportunity to ensure veterinary students gain the variety of practical veterinary skills and business management knowledge they may need. Collaboration between disciplines within the university (e.g. Business Schools) may better prepare students for the workforce. As graduates enter the workforce, they may also be able to more readily identify positive work environments that provide the resources required to maintain their health and well-being and cope with stressors inherent in the profession. In addition, continuing professional development can build leadership and management skills at all levels of the organisation and provide opportunities for internationally trained veterinarians which, over time, should benefit all involved in the veterinary profession.

Employees' health and safety is at risk from workplace bullying, however, few, if any, studies have investigated workplace bullying in the veterinary profession. As workplace bullying has considerable detrimental impacts on employees and has been identified in all types of professions this omission is surprising and warrants further investigation. Research shows

veterinarian have poor psychological health (Bartram et al., 2009a; Jones-Fairnie et al., 2008) and don't seek help from within their organisation (Gardner & Hini, 2006) therefore organisations need to consider stressors and demands such as workplace bullying. Further, consideration must take into account the gender differences that showed higher levels of strain and bullying reported by female veterinarians, particularly as the profession is undergoing feminisation (Shirangi et al., 2013).

## Limitations and future research

This thesis contributes to the knowledge of workplace bullying in the veterinary profession however a number of limitations need to be considered and directions for future research are suggested. First, the study relied on a self-report methodology which may be affected by biases. To reduce social desirability bias the survey was anonymous. The presentation order was important as mentioning workplace bullying early in the questionnaire may have influenced later responses therefore, the behavioural measure was presented prior to any mention of workplace bullying.

Second, the cross-sectional methodology limited conclusion to consider relationships between study variables as causation cannot be inferred. Longitudinal data would add greater understanding to the complex interactions that occur within organisations in the development, maintenance and consequences of positive and negative work environments and should be considered in future research.

Also, only currently practicing New Zealand veterinarians were represented in this sample. Research shows many targets of workplace bullying leave their job. Information from those that have left the profession was not captured and may have added valuable insight. Future research should extend the sample to include those who have previously left the profession.

Differing practice types within the veterinary profession, such as urban or rural, may place different demands on employees or differ in the available resources inherent to practice types. Therefore it could be beneficial in future research to consider practice type as this is likely to influence employees' perceptions of their work environment.

The lack of significant relationships with absenteeism suggest employees continue to work even when bullied rather than use absenteeism as an avoidance coping strategy. Targets may work at a cost to their health as bullying drains their resources however, longitudinal data would be required to establish this. Perhaps rather than absenteeism, targets use alternative leave types, such as sick leave, to provide themselves with additional recovery time when they don't have sufficient resources to cope. Measuring absences of any type the target has used as an avoidance coping strategy may shed further light on this.

Future research could measure previous workplace bullying experiences as the effects can be long lasting even after the bullying has ceased or the target has left. In addition, the inclusion of qualitative methodologies would add a greater depth of understanding that questionnaires are unable to capture.

## Conclusions

Workplace bullying was such a potent stressor that personal and organisational resources were not able to buffer against its negative influence when bullying levels were high.

Destructive leadership and team conflict negatively influenced physical health and psychological strain and employees had higher intentions to quit. These relationships were partially explained by workplace bullying in that destructive leadership and team conflict create a negative environment in which workplace bullying was able to flourish.



The work environment can act as either a resource or a demand. The findings of this thesis highlight how critical it is to employee health and well-being and the long term success of the organisation to establish a positive work environment. Workplace bullying may have devastating consequences and positive resources do little to buffer it. Therefore, promoting ethical leadership over destructive leadership styles is necessary. It is worth having a decent workplace regardless of workplace bullying. Fostering an environment where employees perceive their organisation cares and values them and their efforts should prevent or at least reduce workplace bullying and its associated negative consequences.

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## Appendix A

### Work & Wellbeing Survey FOR VETS

#### Q2 Work and Wellbeing Survey

We are conducting research into people's experiences of work and their wellbeing. We are approaching people from various industries to complete our survey, which covers a variety of different areas that are related to wellbeing at work. The survey focuses on experiences at work that may be positively or negatively associated with your wellbeing. The survey will take you about 15 minutes to complete. We appreciate you agreeing to be part of this study and taking some time to complete our survey. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the research team. The members of the research team are: Tim Bentley (Auckland University of Technology, tim.bentley@aut.ac.nz ), Bevan Catley (Massey University, b.e.catley@massey.ac.nz), Helena Cooper-Thomas (University of Auckland, h.cooper-thomas@auckland.ac.nz), Dianne Gardner (Massey University, d.h.gardner@massey.ac.nz), Michael O'Driscoll (University of Waikato, m.odriscoll@waikato.ac.nz), Maree Roche (University of Waikato, mroche@waikato.ac.nz), Stephen Teo (Auckland University of Technology, stephen.teo@aut.ac.nz), and Linda Trenberth (Griffith University, l.trenberth@griffith.edu.au). This survey is anonymous. The record of your survey responses does not contain any identifying information about you and there is no way to identify you from your responses. This research has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at Massey University. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the project research officer, Laurie McLeod, at laurie.mcleod@aut.ac.nz.

Q47 Do you currently reside in New Zealand?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q48 Do you currently work in New Zealand?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q49 What is your current occupational role? Please choose one of the following:  Veterinarian (1)

- Veterinary nurse (2)
- Veterinary technician (3)
- Other (please specify): (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Q6 Section B: Support from your organisation

For each of the items in this section, select the response that best reflects your thoughts.



	Strongly disagree1 (1)	Moderately disagree2 (2)	Slightly disagree3 (3)	Neither agree nor disagree4 (4)	Slightly agree5 (5)	Moderately agree6 (6)	Strongly agree7 (7)	No opinion8 (8)	Prefer not to answer9 (9)
B1. My organisation strongly considers my goals and values. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B2. Help is available from my organisation when I have a problem. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B3. My organisation really cares about my wellbeing. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B4. My organisation is willing to extend itself to help me perform to the best of my ability. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B5. My organisation cares about my general situation at work. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B6. My organisation cares about my opinions. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B7. My organisation takes pride in my accomplishments at work. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Q8 Section C: Manager behaviours

Please indicate how often your immediate manager does each of the following.

	Never1 (1)	Occasionally2 (2)	Some of the time3 (3)	Much of the time4 (4)	Always5 (5)	Not applicable to me 6 (6)	Prefer not to answer7 (7)
C1. My boss listens to what employees have to say. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C2. My boss does not have a clue about what is going on in our business unit. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C3. My boss is ignorant of things that are not part of the immediate environment. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C4. My boss disciplines employees who violate ethical standards. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C5. My boss makes knee jerk decisions. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C6. My boss places harsh pressure on subordinates. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C7. My boss conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C8. My boss enjoys making people suffer. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C9. Anyone who challenges my boss is dealt with harshly. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C10. My boss has the best interests of employees in mind. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C11. My boss has	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

his/her head in the sand. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C12. My boss holds grudges. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C13. My boss makes fair and balanced decisions. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C14. My boss tells lies. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C15. My boss acts in an unethical manner. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C16. My boss does not act with a high level of integrity. (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C17. My boss takes credit for the work that others have done. (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C18. My boss can be trusted. (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C19. My boss is a micro-manager. (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C20. My boss discusses business ethics or values with employees. (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C21. My boss attempts to exert total control over everyone. (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C22. My boss sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics. (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C23. My boss does not trust others to do tasks properly. (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C24. My boss wants to dominate/control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
everything. (24)							
C25. My boss defines success not just by results but also the way they are obtained. (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C26. I do not know what my boss expects of me. (26)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C27. My boss asks “what is the right thing to do?” when making decisions. (27)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C28. I have to guess what my boss really expects of me. (28)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C29. I do not know what my boss thinks of my work. (29)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C30. My boss does not provide an appropriate level of supervision and oversight. (30)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Section D: Group behaviours      The items below ask about social interactions in your work group/unit. Respond to each item using the response scale provided.

	Never1 (1)	Occasionally2 (2)	Some of the time3 (3)	Much of the time4 (4)	Always5 (5)	Prefer not to answer6 (6)
D1. There is friction among members in my work unit. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D2. There are personality conflicts evident in my	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

work unit. (2)						
D3. There is tension among members in my work unit. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D4. There is emotional conflict among members of my work unit. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D5. People in my work unit have different views about the work being done. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D6. There are conflicts about ideas in my work unit. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D7. There is conflict about the work I do in my work unit. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D8. There are differences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

of opinion in my work unit. (8)						
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Q10 Section E: Wellbeing Over the past 6 months, to what extent have you felt each of the following? Please select the response which best reflects how you have felt in this period.

	Not at all1 (1)	No more than usual2 (2)	Rather more than usual3 (3)	Much more than usual4 (4)	Prefer not to answer5 (5)
E1. Been able to concentrate on what you are doing? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E2. Lost much sleep over worry? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E3. Felt you are playing a useful part in things? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E4. Felt capable of making decisions about things? (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E5. Felt constantly under strain? (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E6. Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties? (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E7. Been able to enjoy your normal day to day activities? (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E8. Been able to face up to your problems? (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

E9. Been feeling unhappy or depressed? (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E10. Been losing confidence in yourself? (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E11. Been	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
thinking of yourself as worthless person? (11)					
E12. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered? (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q14 Section F: Physical health

Over the past 6 months, how often have you experienced each of the following symptoms?

	Less than once per month or never <sup>1</sup> (1)	Once or twice per month <sup>2</sup> (2)	Once or twice per week <sup>3</sup> (3)	Once or twice per day <sup>4</sup> (4)	Several times per day <sup>5</sup> (5)	Prefer not to answer <sup>6</sup> (6)
F1. An upset stomach or nausea (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F2. Backache (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F3. Trouble sleeping (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F4. Headache (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F5. Acid indigestion or heartburn (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F6. Eye strain (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F7. Diarrhoea (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F8. Stomach cramps (not menstrual) (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F9. Constipation (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F10. Ringing in the ears (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F11. Loss of appetite (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F12. Dizziness (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F13. Tiredness or fatigue (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 Section G: Absenteeism and intentions to quit

The following statements ask how you feel about your present job. For each item, please select the response which best reflects how you feel.

G1. Thoughts about quitting this job cross my mind.

- Never1 (1)
- Rarely2 (2)
- Sometimes3 (3)
- Often4 (4)
- Very often5 (5)
- All the time6 (6)
- Prefer not to answer7 (7)

Q18 G2. I plan to look for a new job within the next 12 months.

- Strongly disagree1 (1)
- Moderately disagree2 (2)
- Slightly disagree3 (3)
- Slightly agree4 (4)
- Moderately agree5 (5)
- Strongly agree6 (6)
- Prefer not to answer7 (7)

Q19 G3. How likely is it that, over the next year, you will actively look for a new job outside of this organisation?

- Very unlikely1 (1)
- Moderately unlikely2 (2)
- Somewhat unlikely3 (3)
- Somewhat likely4 (4)
- Moderately likely5 (5)
- Very likely6 (6)
- Prefer not to answer7 (7)

Q16 G4. Thinking about the past 6 months, approximately how many days have you been absent unofficially from your work? Select the category which best applies to you. [Do not include leave which has been official, such as sick leave, annual leave, or bereavement leave/tangihanga.]

- 0 days (0)
- 1-2 days (1)
- 3-5 days (2)
- 6-10 days (3)

- More than 10 days (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Q21 Section H: Your job performance

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = the worst performance anyone could have at your job, 5 to 6 = average level of performance, and 10 = the performance of a top worker, how would you rate yourself and others?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)	Prefer not to answer (11)
H3. Your own overall job performance on the days you have worked during the past 6 months? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q28 Section K: Behaviour of others at work The following behaviours are examples of negative behaviour in the workplace. Over the last 6 months, how often have YOU PERSONALLY experienced the following negative acts at work? Please select the response that best corresponds with your experience over the last 6 months.

	Never1 (1)	Now and then2 (2)	Monthly3 (3)	Weekly4 (4)	Daily5 (5)	Prefer not to answer6 (6)
K1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K2. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K3. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K4. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K5. Spreading of gossip and rumours about you (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K6. Being ignored or excluded (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>K7. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person (i.e. habits and background, attitudes or your private life) (7)</p> <p>K8. Being shouted at or</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>being the target of spontaneous anger (8)</p> <p>K9. Intimidating behaviour such as fingerpointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking/barring your way (9)</p> <p>K10. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job (10)</p> <p>K11. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes (11)</p> <p>K12. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach (12)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q62 Over the last 6 months, how often have YOU PERSONALLY experienced the following negative acts at work? Please select the response that best corresponds with your experience over the last 6 months.

	Never1 (1)	Now and then2 (2)	Monthly3 (3)	Weekly4 (4)	Daily5 (5)	Prefer not to answer6 (6)
K13. Persistent criticism of your work and effort (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K14. Having your opinions ignored (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K15. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K16. Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K17. Having allegations made against you (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K18. Excessive monitoring of your work (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K19. Pressure not to claim something which by right you are entitled to (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

K20. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K21. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
K22. Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q35 Section M: Bullying at work Bullying is defined as "a situation where a person feels they have repeatedly been on the receiving end of negative actions from one or more other people, in a situation where it is difficult to defend themselves against these actions. These negative actions could be physical or non-physical (e.g. verbal abuse), and may include negative online behaviours. A one-off incident is not defined as bullying." Please consider this definition in answering the questions below. The questions below refer to all types of bullying, including face-to-face and online bullying.

Q38 M4. Do you consider yourself to have been bullied at your workplace over the past 6 months?

- No1 (0)
- Yes, but only rarely2 (1)
- Yes, now and then3 (2)
- Yes, several times per week4 (3)
- Yes, almost daily5 (4)
- Prefer not to answer6 (5)

Q47 Section O: Demographics O1. How old are you?

Q48 O2. Your gender:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Prefer not to answer (3)

Q49 O4. Which ethnic groups do you belong to? Select any that apply.

- New Zealand European (1)
- Other European (2)
- Maori/Cook Island Maori (3)
- Pasifika (4)
- Chinese (5)
- Indian (6)
- Other (please specify): (7) \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer (8)

Q50 O5. How long have you been in your current position?

- Years (1)
- Months (2)

Q52 O7. What is your role in this organisation? Choose one of the following:

- Senior manager/executive (1)
- Mid-level manager (2)
- First-line supervisor (3)
- Non-managerial employee (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Q53 O8. How long have you worked for your present organisation? (months/years)

- Years (1)
- Months (2)



## Appendix B



# MASSEY UNIVERSITY ALBANY

9 July 2014

Dr Bevan Catley  
School of Management  
Dr Dianne Gardner School of Psychology  
Albany Campus

Dear Bevan & Dianne

**Re: Survey of Work and Wellness**

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 3 July 2014.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

**A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:**

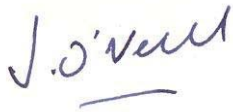
*"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*

*If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill,*

*Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail  
humanethics@massey.ac.nz*

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely



John G O'Neill (Professor)  
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee  
and Director (Research Ethics)**

cc Prof S Leberman HoS  
School of  
Management  
**Manawatu campus**

Massey University Human Ethics Committee Accredited by the Health Research Council