

**WORKPLACE BULLYING – A CASE STUDY ON RHB  
BANK BERHAD, MALAYSIA**



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**WORKPLACE BULLYING – A CASE STUDY ON RHB BANK  
BERHAD, MALAYSIA**



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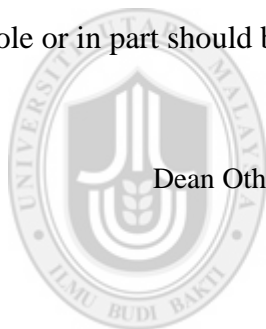
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## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan adakah berlakunya kejadian buli di Bank RHB Berhad. Disamping itu, kajian ini juga menganalisis sama ada wujud pertalian signifikan dengan kejadian buli di tempat kerja dengan elemen demografi seperti umur, jantina, bangsa, tempoh bertugas dan jawatan mempunyai. Jenis pelakuan buli dibahagi kepada 6 jenis, iaitu buli berkaitan kerja, serangan peribadi, pengasingan sosial, buli secara verbal, buli secara fizikal dan penyebaran khabar angin. Sebanyak 100 soal selidik telah diedarkan mengikut persampelan kelompok secara rawak, di mana seramai 76 pekerja RHB Bank dicawangan Lebu Pantai dan Jelutong, Pulau Pinang serta Bakar Arang, Sungai Petani memberi maklumbalas. Instrumen kajian yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah set soal-selidik NAQ (Negative Acts Questionnaires) yang telah digubah sewajarnya. Data yang diperolehi telah diproses secara kolektif dengan menggunakan Pakej Statistik untuk Sains Sosial ( SPSS ) versi 19. Teknik-teknik statistik yang digunakan ialah kekerapan, peratusan, min, median, sisihan piawai, Ujian Hipotesis dan "Pearson's Correlation". Berdasarkan analisis soal-selidik, ia menunjukkan bahawa wujud hubungan yang signifikan antara jantina, jawatan pekerjaan dan tempoh pekerjaan dengan kejadian buli di tempat kerja. Walau bagaimanapun, bangsa dan umur tidak mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan buli di tempat kerja .

*Keywords: Buli Tempat Kerja, Bank RHB Berhad, Demografi*



## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine if workplace bullying occurs at RHB Bank Berhad. In addition, this study also analyzed if there was a significant relationship between workplace bullying and the respondents' demographic information such as age, gender, race, years of employment and position. Types of bullying are divided into six forms, namely work-related bullying, personal attacks, social isolation, verbal aggression, physical aggression and the spreading of rumours. A total of 100 questionnaires were selected by random cluster sampling of the group and distributed, whereby 76 employees of RHB Bank branches at Pantai Lebu and Jelutong, Penang and Bakar Arang, Sungai Petani responded. The instrument used in this study was the slightly modified set of questionnaires NAQ (Negative Acts Questionnaire) accordingly. The data obtained were processed collectively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. Statistical techniques used were frequency, percentage, mean, median, standard deviation, Hypothesis Testing and Pearson's Correlation. Based on the analysis of the questionnaires, it was shown that there exists a significant relationship between gender, job designation and duration of employment with workplace bullying. Race and age, however, did not seem to have a significant relationship with workplace bullying.

*Keywords: Workplace Bullying, RHB Bank Berhad, Demography*



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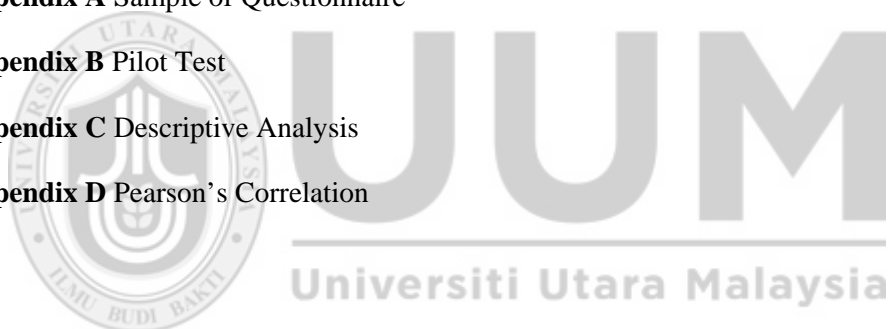
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## **List of Abbreviations**

WHO	World Health Organization
ILO	International Labour Office
PSI	Public Services International
ICN	International Council of Nurses
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
DOSH	Department of Occupational Safety and Health
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Act
BAFIA	Banking and Financial Institutions Act 1989
ATMs	Automated Teller Machines
CDM	Cash Deposit Machines
CQM	Cheque Deposit Machines
MTUC	Malaysian Trade Union Congress
EPF	Employee Provident Fund
SOCSSO	Social Security
IPD	Institute of Personnel and Development
NAQ	Negative Acts Questionnaires
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The act of bullying is often a demonstration of abuse of power, characteristically regarded as a manifestation of workplace violence. In 2006, Takaki, J.L. and Yano E. published a paper in which they reported that the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Office (ILO), the Public Services International (PSI) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) correspondingly define bullying (or mobbing) as a “repeated and long-term offensive behaviour involving spiteful, unkind or malevolent efforts to embarrass or demoralize an individual or groups of employees” and harassment is defined as “any conduct based on age, disability, HIV status, domestic circumstances, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, colour, language, religion, political” or other unrequited or unwanted status and that influence the dignity of employees at work.

At present, the term bullying, violence, intimidation and threats at the workplace may not be as common in Malaysia as it is elsewhere in the developed world. This could be because Malaysian labour laws currently do not afford distinct protection against workplace bullying (Mallow, 2014). However, it has been identified as an important aspect of safety at work when observed in the European continent and the United States. In Malaysia, a definition of workplace violence has been acknowledged by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) in the guideline which they have published entitled "Guidance of Stress and Prevention of Violence at Workplace" in 2001 (Martino & Mohtar, 2001). In this guideline, it is stated that violence is an incident where workers are abused, threatened, attacked or a victim of bad behaviour in a work-related environment.

Numerous studies have shown that this phenomenon not only occurs in Western countries, but has become a concern around the world, where researchers in the United Kingdom, Northern Europe and Australia mainly refer to it as “workplace bullying” (Sheehan, 1999), (Rayner, 1997) (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). European countries such as France and Romania recorded the highest number of violent occurrence at the workplace (McNamee, 1998). Indonesia recorded the highest number for Asia where 0.3% of the victims were males, and 1.1% female victims were reported to be victims of workplace violence. Although it showed a small amount, but does not reflect the actual situation that occurred because some cases are not reported (Atkinson, 2000).

In Malaysia, based on studies by the ILO, violence in the workplace has not reached an alarming rate. But we cannot deny that it takes place in the work organization based on the number of government and private agencies. The Borneo Post online reported that to this point, the Malaysian Human Resources Ministry has defined anti-sexual harassment policies within the “Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”, however those for anti-bullying is still sorely lacking (Apau, 2010).

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) had published the Guidance for the Prevention of Stress and Violence at Workplace under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 by the year 2001 to tackle this dilemma. It is conceived to aid proprietors, staffs and their counterparts to identify the prospects for violence at work in addition to offer pragmatic directions for the advancement of risk minimizing stratagems. Apart from this, the Malaysian Occupational Safety and

Health Act (OSHA 1994) under section 15 states by and large the duties of the employer which includes ensuring the health, safety and welfare of his employees while at the work premise.

Britain's Employment Relations Act 1999 as well as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, encompasses their fundamental regulations in relation to workplace violence whereas the government of New Zealand had designed the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 which was circulated to as a compendium for both employers and employees on how to manage violent behaviour or occurrences at the workplace. The United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration, (OSHA), acts as an authorized body that acknowledges the dangers and threats of violence at place of work.

Bullying behaviour means the act or effect that can be seen in physical or psychological. Thus, the concept of "injury or discomfort" explains the impulse for action directly or indirectly through humour or crafty action against a person (Azizan, 2004). Olweus (1993) pointed out that bullying happens only when there is a power imbalance between the bully who has the advantage of power, influence and power over the victim. Pepler, Connolly and Craig (1997) have divided bullying to three main components of bullies, victims and other parties apart from the bullies, the non-victims.

According to Barton (2006) bullies are categorized by the level of conflict they engage in, and the effectiveness of their aggression against victims. Bullies are usually comprised of those who are physically strong however insecure about themselves. They have no sense of responsibility for the actions they have done, are

often tempted to control and dominate and not be able to understand and appreciate other people (Twemlow, 2000).

Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) have established that characters prone to being bullied can be categorized into at least two groups: targets of bullying and provocative victims. The first group, as claimed by Zapf (1999), in a German study, could not be distinguished from the control group in terms of personality dimensions measured, meaning they were unfortunately targeted by the bully. Provocative victims, on the other hand, are regarded as those who have apprehensive and hostile reaction patterns. They behave in ways that may irritate and create tense surroundings, thus leading to social neglect or exclusion, because others perceive their behaviour as annoying and aggressive (Olweus, 1978).

Non-victims are identified as employees who themselves were not violated but whose perceptions, fears and expectations are changed as a result of being vicariously exposed to violence (Barling, 1996). They either support the bully, or try to avoid being a target, their indifference indirectly propagating the act.

Smith and Sharp (1994) also revealed that among the types of bullying common are (1) physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, taking or destroying other people's rights (2) using words such as giving titles, berate, censure and ridiculed, belittled repeatedly and ties with family and (3) indirectly, such as spread malevolence through rumours and remove one of his social standing amongst his peers.

Another study carried out by Connell and Farrington (1996) describes the types of bullying as follows (1) attack on the physical through speech, (2) psychological attacks and threat in order to hurt and intimidate and (3) injure or interfere with the

same feelings of victims continuously and repeatedly to the physical or spiritual. Hence it is clear that bullying can occur physically and non-physically, directly and indirectly, such as gossip, isolation or boycott (Olweus, 1991). Yet another study found that the form bullying has been described in more detail, such as (1) attack and cause physical suffering to the victim, (2) use words such as mocking or name calling that may be objectionable, (3) threaten, frighten and intimidate, (4) extortion, steal, confiscate property and (5) to exclude a friend from the peer (Sudermann, Jaffe & Schieck, 1996).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

In Malaysia, cases of bullying at the workplace are not given much attention and more emphasison bullying in schools. Workplace bullying in Malaysia, although exists, has not reached a disturbing stage yet (Hanisah et al., 2010). Although cases of bullying in the workplace have not caused deaths as it has occurred in schools, it cannot be taken for granted by the government. Examples of death as a consequence of bullying at the school level is when a Royal Military College (RMC) student was expelled and four others suspended in connection with the death of another student, Mohammed NaimMustaqim Mohamad Sobri, 16, after an alleged bullying in 2010 (Rahman, I.A and Majid, E., 28 June 2010). Due to the scarcity of statistical informationof workplace bullying, types of violentbehaviour which is most frequently demonstrated in the workplace cannot be identified (Rahman & Shamsudin, 2000). Therefore, this study will examine the relationship between the occurrence of workplace bullying with age, race, gender, work designation and duration of being employed.

Hitherto, very little research on bullying at work is done in Malaysia, whether in public or private sector. One research, by Khalib Abdul Latiff, was conducted at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 2006 which discussed the causes/roots of workplace bullying and found it to be multi-factorial, which ranged from personal, workgroup, organizational and societal factors. Another, more recent research which dwells into the impact of workplace bullying on work performance was published by Yahya et al. in 2012. They found that organizational cultures worsen the problem when the leaders either do not recognize workplace bullying or dismiss it as tough management. However, in this study, the researcher examined the causes of bullying in the workplace based on Zapf's model of work factors, personality, work groups and organizations.

The study conducted by Hershcovis(2010) found that bullying in the workplace is more severe and dangerous when compared to sexual harassment in the workplace. Employees who experienced bullying, rudeness or social conflict were more likely to resign their jobs, are unhappy, be dissatisfied with their jobs and have less nourishing relationships with their bosses than employees who were sexually harassed (Hershcovis&Barling, 2008). Researchers have also indicated that it is more difficult for victims because they do not know what to do as there are no policies or laws that can protect them compared the victims of sexual harassment. Most of them will feel more stressed and less committed to jobs and prefer to stop working. In another study by Hershcovis and Barling (2010) comparing the treatment effects of bullying in the workplace, sexual harassment in the workplace has shown that both are interconnected, but aggressive behaviour or bullying at work is higher affect against sexual harassment in the workplace.



Therefore the government must take the initiative to attend to bullying incidence at the workplace as was done for addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. The Public Services Department has issued guidelines handling sexual harassment at work in the service public in 1999 as in previous studies has shown that in every organization place bullying among employees will occur, whether public or private sector.

The increase in reporting cases of bullying in the workplace have been identified globally as a critical crisis in the work environment. Several researches revealed that bullying can cause a harsh blow to job satisfaction as mentioned by (Einarsen, S. & Raknes, B. (1997) as well as the well-being of its casualties (Zapf, Knorz & Kulla, 1996, Einarsen, Matthiesen, & Skogstad, 1998). Among the consequences of bullying on the organization was the increase in absenteeism, increasing the number of employees who want to stop or leave the organization, increase number of replacement workers (turnover) and the number of workers who quit early (Leymann, 1996 and Rayner, 1997).

Previous research results have indicated that 53% of the respondents stated that they were bullied at work (Rayner and Cooper, 1997). A study of 5000 respondents across all sectors of employment in Britain has found that 1 of 10 workers have stated that they were bullied within the first 6 months that attributed to financial loss of about US\$18 million per day of production (Keelan, 2000). One other study with 9000 respondents among the public sector has claimed that the cost amounted to US\$180 million in loss time and productivity (Farrell, 2002).

There was also a study in 2005 involving 1110 people civil servants in the Department of Health (NHS) in the United Kingdom that reported 38% of respondents have experience at least one or more types of bullying and 42% respondents had witnessed the bullying of others. Young doctors are most at risk of experiencing bullying compared to other positions mainly due to the transition from trainee to having full consultant responsibility is a particularly stressful time (Quine, 2002). Yet another study conducted in the United Kingdom has shown that most managers are victims of bullying in the workplace (Hoel, 2013).

Based on the reports, even though bullying in the workplace borders on a dangerous level, but most victims are too afraid to report to the appropriate parties. There is also a probability that once an incident is reported, it will involve less effective process to resolve it and consumes time to lodge a complaint and subsequently change the workplace environment (UNISON, 1997).

### **1.3 Research Question**

The questions of this study are as follows:

- a. Does bullying at the workplace occur among bank employees in RHB bank?
- b. Is there a strong association between workplace bullying among banking sector employees in RHB bank based on demographic factors (Age, gender, race, duration of service and designation)?

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

### **1.4.1 General Objectives of the Study**

The main focus of this study is about bullying among blue collar workers in the banking sector. It delves into whether an employees' age, gender, race, designation or duration of employment has any link to workplace bullying. Dimension of bullying behaviour encompasses attacking the private sphere, demeaning them; work related bullying and physical violence/aggression as well as victims of gossip.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as such;

- a. To determine whether there is bullying in work in the banking sector in Malaysia.
- b. To determine which demographic factor between age, gender, race, job designation, and duration of employment have significant relationship with bullying in the workplace

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This project paper is considered important in three ways, firstly it contributes to knowledge, secondly, it is significant to the formation of a policy or policies related and finally, it would be useful to the practitioner or person involved in the study (Baker, 1994).

This study is a systematic study of which can generate empirical data relating to the existence of bullying in the workplace among bank employees or other institutions of similar administrative workings. Indirectly, it also can highlight the difference

between the demographic factors with respect to workplace bullying among target employees.

This study should be conducted in view of the existence of a hidden problem and also because it leaves a deep and lasting impression for the victim. Although bullying at the workplace is still considered a first world problem and may not achieve a level of concern compared to developed countries, it has to be taken seriously because issues like this in general have created an unhealthy atmosphere in the workplace and against the rights of an employee to work in a safe condition without fear as well as affecting work performance and productivity.

This study can also determine which group of bank employees are affected the most with bullying and suggests appropriate action plans to address or reduce the level of bullying in the workplace based on the age, gender, race, job designation and duration of employment.

This study can also be a source of information about bullying at work among bank employees (or organisations of similar design) to draw up action plans in line with the current situation and become a source of reference for the study of bullying in the workplace in the future.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study aims to determine whether bullying occurred in the banking sector and whether workplace bullying has any strong significance among any demographics factors among bank employees in three RHB Bank branches in Penang and Kedah.

The focus of the research was the relationship between bullying in work among bank employees by gender, race, level position, age, and work experience.

This study involved only employees at several branches of RHB Bank Sdn. Bhd., namely Jelutong, Lebu Pantai and Bakar Arang branch. The researcher was unable to access a wider population, mainly because no positive feedbacks were received from the other bank branches in Penang, even though the letter requesting permission were sent out to all existing bank branches in Penang. The poor response prompted the researcher to branch out to Sungai Petani. Convenience sampling was applied when selecting these branches. Convenience sampling commonly assumes a homogeneous population. And this case, it is assumed that most functioning bank outlets share similar working environment and conditions as the sample group.

The findings from this study are the result of analysis on a limited number only and it will depend on the honesty of the respondents as well as precise and correct answers to the questionnaire submitted. Respondents are given a guarantee that all their responses in this study are confidential. Validity and reliability is highly dependent on integrity and honesty of the respondent's answers. The translation of questions about bullying into two languages may create a possibility of misinterpretation which could give rise to information predisposition likewise, the idea and severity of the concept of bullying may differ according to individual perception and cultural settings.

## **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.7.1 Bullying in the Workplace**

Workplace bullying is a manipulative, repetitive act stemmed from the desire to harm, suppress, and injure (physically or mentally) someone who is smaller or weaker or have no influence/power, at the place of work or while on duty, and can be physical or spiritual attacks done repeatedly, with the intention to intimidate, create an unpleasant environment or cause feelings of anxiety.

### **1.7.2 Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour is the act conducted by an individual or group of individuals who cause misery to the victims by way of direct aggressive acts, for example mocking, admonishment, and intimidation; or indirect bullying such as social isolation, spreading rumours, or withdrawal of needed information.

### **1.7.3 Demographic Variables**

Demographic variables stated here would encompass personal factors of the target group such as age, gender, race, designation of work and duration of employment.



## **1.8 Organization of Remaining Chapters**

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter will comprises the background, objectives, research questions and statements as well as the significance of the topic of study.

### **Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 consists of reviewed literature from past researches to support the framework of this study.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter explains the research methodology, research instrument and design, which is the most important subject in the research project.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter discusses the statistical analysis result of the study. It starts with the profile of the target group and then move onto the SPSS analysis for independent variables and dependent variables. There will then be a deeper discussion of the results, summarizing the research project based on the findings and results on the data analysis via SPSS methodology.

### **Chapter 5**

This chapter will contain the recommendations, suggestions, implication and limitation in completing this research project.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews scholarly publications, journals, books, and other materials of the previous researches done by other scholars to provide the baseline information and groundwork for this project paper. It forms the concepts and philosophies supporting the project paper and serves as reference to the research framework and proposition development.

#### **2.2 Banking Sector in Malaysia**

Before we delve further into the subject matter, it is relevant to have a brief introduction about the sector involved as well as illustrate how important the mental and physical health of a bank employee since it affects their productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work (Comish & Swindle, 1994). The Banking and Financial Institutions Act 1989 (BAFIA) covers the regulations and licensing of the banking sector which encompasses licensed institutions such as merchant banks, commercial banks, finance companies, money brokers, discount houses whereas Bank Negara Malaysia oversees these establishments. The banking sector shoulders great responsibility as monetary intercessors and is a main source of financing for the national budget, accounting for about 70% of the total assets of the financial system as at end-1999 (Bank Negara Malaysia Annual Report, 2012).

According to statistics published by Bank Negara Malaysia on their website, Malaysia has a total number of 27 Commercial Banks, 13 Investment Banks, 5 International Islamic Banks and 16 Islamic Banks (Bank Negara Statistics, 2014). Currently, all existing commercial banks have acquired or merged with prevailing finance companies in Malaysia, making them obsolete. As for local, minor or regional banks, all were merged or liquidated before independence. At present, the financial sector has metamorphosed to become a significant foundation of progress in its own right. The sector, in the banking and insurance industries, now provides employment to more than 123,000 Malaysians (Zeti, 2007).

### **2.3 Typical Working Conditions at a Bank**

Before discussing the findings of the study, it is necessary to outline the banking sector context where the participants were employed at the time of their workplace bullying experience. This gives a clear picture and helps understand what the target group faces on a daily basis. Employees could find that working at a bank be very taxing and challenging. The bank's institute is tiered, administrative and littered with exclusive protocols and codes of practice at every turn. A usual working day starts from 8.45am to 5.45pm. However, it is obligatory for all employees to stay long after the bank closes its doors, whereby they are required to sign in by 7.45am and leave after balancing all transactions and preparing documentation for the next day, by 7.30pm.

Other additional tasks apart from the usual working hours involve loading and unloading of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Cash and Cheque Deposit Machines (CDM and CQM) during public holidays. A common day at work for a bank employee relies

heavily on client interaction, whether face to face or even via telephone. Bank staff who have been employed for a longer period and stayed loyal to their organization will build up good rapport with the clientele. They are also knowledgeable and proficient with the merchandise, skills in dealing with customers and understanding the clients' requirements. Thus, frequent turnover will somehow causes uneasiness to the customers and disruption of services.

Bank employees could be under stress due to many experiences. Occupational environment, organizational structure and policies, role and task demands have been recognized as influential factors in the level of stress (Dhamangadan, 1988). A study conducted by Khattak et al. (2011) in banks recommended that "the workplace is possibly a vital cradle of stress due to the extensive duration of time they spent in their workplace." Hence, it is no surprise that job stress exists in most all working conditions regardless of the nature of work. It is vital to have good understanding on the workings and working conditions of the subject in question, and from this observation, it is safe to say that bank employees shoulder great responsibility and are already much stress. Bullying constitutes, and is constituted by, hostile work environments (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2009) discerned by persistent trepidation and dread of work colleagues. Bullying is both a result of and a reoccurring source in a hostile work settings (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008). Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2003) concluded that exposure to bullying in the work place must also be seen as a significant source of social stress at work. Furthermore, bullying was found to be associated with a negative work-climate, high workload and unsatisfactory relationships at work (Hoel & Cooper, 2000).

## **2.4 The Phenomenon of Bullying in the Banking Sector and Previous Studies**

Workplace bullying, common and widespread is a problem that knows no geographical borders and is not confined to a particular industry (Yandrick, 1999). Now it is a significant issue in the workplace. Studies conducted have shown the implication of this bullying will affect either the individual or organization. In Ireland, the government has established a "Taskforce" to curb bullying in the workplace in 1999. In 2004, the Irish government has been working with an advisory group of government experts in the fight against bullying in the workplace (O'Connell, Calvert & Watson, 2007).

As for some of the studies conducted pertaining to bullying in the banking sector, it is worth to mention the outcomes of a study conducted by Maciel, Cavalcante & Matos (2007), where 7.9% of respondents reported of being bullied, at least once a week in the last 6 months. They were subjected to an insurmountable amount of work, given confusing or unclear guidelines and found that consistent bullying affected/ damaged the victims' mental and/or physical health. In another study, carried out by Yilmaz and Soydas (2006), 15.9% of respondents out of a sample of 200 Turkish banking employees have been preys to bullies during at least half the year. In this study the most frequent act of bullying recounted were to carry out duties well below one's station and/or qualification as well as work performance being affected due to information being withheld.

In a study by Akgeyik et al., (2007) about bullying in the banking sector in Turkey (involving 262 subjects), it was discovered that one in every four employees have

claimed to experience bullying at work. Verdasca (2011) reported 39.8% of the respondents in bank in Portugal also reported that they had been the victim of bullying. Einarsen et al., (2003) also found that the ratio of victims of mobbing among the bank employees was 4.9%. On the contrary, there were studies that suggested that 24% of the bank employees (out of the total population, 5288 were employed in the banking sector) were victims of mobbing (Hoeland Cooper, 2000). According to Giga and Hoel's (2003) findings, a ratio of 43 per cent in banking and finance in the United Kingdom identified bullying as a cause of workplace stress. Lastly, in another study on bank employees by Almeida (2003) found a prevalence of bullying behaviour of 56.3% of 384 banking employees during previous working life. All previous studies stated show that workplace bullying does exist in the banking sector.

According to the conclusions offered in this research, victims of bullying alleged that more often than not, the section or department head did not appraise them for a hard earned promotion deliberately, 47.1% alleged that they were oppressed and that they did not risk to defend themselves whether it is to demand being paid for overtime or claim medical leave, 76.4% mentioned that they were "frequently" or "occasionally" given constantly new tasks whilst 4.7% stated that they were given unreasonable or unnecessary chores.

When it comes to workplace bullying cases, it is not easily accessible. The two main reasons being it not being reported in the first place, and secondly, the confidentiality and policies adhered to by the company/establishment.



Employers of any institution or establishment should maintain a conducive working environment, and this includes minimising the occurrence of bullying. Ignoring it would be detrimental to productivity, competency and profitability as it will cause demotivation, low morale, and increase truancy among employees. Nevertheless, this responsibility is not solely borne by the employer, but takes both parties. However, most bully victims hesitate when it comes to reporting or voicing their bully problems, for fear of added harassment from their bully or facing problems with their work and future possibilities. The fear of losing their jobs, especially since the economy not doing too, also sways their judgement.

According to 2007 WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey data, only 3 percent of bullied targets file lawsuits and 50 percent never report of their bullying experience Namie, G. (2007). This describes why more than three quarter of targets would rather leave their jobs for a new start elsewhere than to deal with the bullying (McLaughlin, K., 2014). Many victims of workplace bullying suffer silently out of fear of retribution and because it is often hard for them to fully explain what is happening and how it started (Brooks, C., 2014).

Apart from reluctance to report bullying incidents at work, it is quite a huge obstacle to overcome the strict terms, conditions as well as confidentiality restrictions placed by an establishment, making it near impossible to access bully cases that has transpired and reported. The ones that do come out into the light are the ones that get the media's attention, which are few and far between. Details of cases that are pending in the

Malaysian Labour courts are inaccessible mainly because claimant's names and cases are protected.

The Rkaina, S. (2014) reported in the Mirror Online that two female bank employees were subjected to years of sexual harassment and bullying by managers and clients. Maria Rayworth and Deena Rosario Al Bazi claim they were subjected to lewd behaviour by customers and were not backed up by bosses at the Arab National Bank in London. In another case, Helen Green, a former London Deutsche Bank employee, was subjected to "a relentless campaign of mean and spiteful behaviour designed to cause her distress" and cited co-workers for a "deliberate and concerted campaign of bullying," isolating her and subjecting her to "offensive, abusive, intimidating, denigrating humiliation, patronizing, infantile and insulting words and behaviour." She was awarded by the court \$1.5 million in damages (The Daily Mail Online, 2006). The Guardian (2010) reports today that Paul Brookes, a visually impaired employee with Barclays Bank has been paid £20,000 after claiming that he had correction fluid dropped in his hair, was expected to memorise 500 contact numbers during a four week period and then reprimanded for making mistakes and was also told off for being "too familiar" on the phone before being told that he was "too cold".

As stated by Chew Abdullah (2012), Labour Department statistics reported about 4,000 cases of violence from 1990 to 1998 that were filed in the industrial court and most of the cases were on sabotage, fighting at work, threat, assault and harassment. Malaysian Labour Department reported deviant behaviour such as sabotage, fighting at work, threat, assault, and harassment (Shamsudin & Rahman, 2006). However, it is reported that formal statistics on the phenomenon of workplace bullying is unavailable by the Labour

Department. Atkinson (2002) claims that this could be attributable to companies' reluctance to report negative incidences at workplace because it may tarnish the company's image.

Tan., K., (2013) reported in The Star Online two cases of bullying whereby the victims chose to remain anonymous. Jeffrey (not his real name), 27, had to endure verbal abuse and personal attacks by his former employer for a year before finally quitting. Another anonymous victim, brand manager Adilah, 28, was sexually harassed by her former boss, who made sexual remarks about her body, asked her to drive him home alone, and even invited her to his place after work. She also left her job in the end.

Bernama (2010) also reported an article on workplace bullying, highlighting several cases shared by victims who wished to remain anonymous. An officer at a banking firm, Azman Bahar (not his real name) in his late twenties, was always given copious amounts of work, forcing him alone to go back late and even have his medical leave questioned.

Norlina Samad (also not her real name) , she was always bullied by more senior colleagues when first served first, and was told it was a common rite of passages for all junior associates. Both of these victims claimed that their plea for intervention from the human resource department fell on deaf ears, and were told that they should take it in their stride.

To date, the Human Resources Ministry has formed anti-sexual harassment policies but it does not apply for anti-bullying (Apau, 2010). According to Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) Sarawak secretary, Andrew Lo, the non-existence of a similar policy, together with the Asian culture for work hierarchies, most bullying cases are accepted as

part and parcel of work and swept under the rug. Malaysian Employers' Federation Associate Consultant in Industrial Relations, George Young Jr, claims that many employees, however, are not aware of their rights and how to express their opinions while ensuring that their jobs are secure, particularly if the bullies are higher up the corporate ladder than they are (Apau, 2010). This could be the reason why workplace bullying cases never seem to crop up.

The General Secretary of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress in 2013, Abdul Halim Mansur claimed that among workplace bullying cases, physical bullying was not commonly reported. On the contrary, issues on providing insufficient protection to employees, failure to register for social security (SOCSO) and Employee Provident Fund (EPF), sexual harassment and violation of basic rights or labour laws as per the Malaysian Employment Act seem to be recurrent (Tan, 2013).

## **2.5 Anti-Bullying Regulations in Malaysia**

The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) had published the Guidance for the Prevention of Stress and Violence at Workplace under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 by the year 2001 to tackle this dilemma. It is conceived to aid proprietors, staffs and their counterparts to identify the prospects for violence at work in addition to offer pragmatic directions for the advancement of risk minimizing stratagems. Apart from this, the Malaysian Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA 1994) Act 514 under Section 15 declares that by and large the duties of the employer includes ensuring the health, safety and welfare of his workers while at the work premise "It shall be the duty of every employer and every self-employed person to

ensure, so far as is practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his employees". The Industrial Relations Act 1967 (Act 177) also highlights legal duties for employers to ensure safety within the workplace.

The Malaysian Human Resources Ministry has defined anti-sexual harassment policies within the "Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" but not those for anti-bullying (Apau, 2010).

If the acts of bullying transform into physical force, a police report can be lodged. The police will then investigate the matter under the existing Penal Code (Act 574) either for assault, grievous hurt, threats, criminal intimidation or others. Bullying in the workplace may also create a civil claim for damages if it constitutes a form of discrimination.

## **2.6 Definition of Workplace Bullying**

Generally, bullying can be expressed as a mode of behaviour or deliberate acts stemmed from the desire to harm and injure one who is smaller or weaker or have no influence/power. In 1992, pioneering British journalist Andrea Adams devised the phrase "workplace bullying" to define a group of harassing behaviour that employees may be exposed to at any period of their vocation, irrespective of their association in a protected class based on gender, ethnicity, age, etc. (Leymann, 1990). Einarsen S., (2000) in his study has claimed that bullying at work, according to most definitions, takes place when someone, is exposed to negative acts from one or several others repeatedly over a long period of time (usually 6 months), in a situation where the victim, for various reasons, may face difficulties protecting or shielding themselves

against these actions. Bullies adopt negative behaviours in order to create unease among the victims repeatedly or continuously. Victims of bullying occur in two ways, directly and indirectly, enacted by a person or a group of bullies in order to show the strength or position or influence held by bullies (Shapiro, Baumeister & Kessler, 1991).

In a study conducted by Vartiainen and Hyyti (2002) discovered that gossiping, rumour mongering and devaluing an employee's input to the workplace or the job itself were some of the most common type of bullying reported by prison officers in Finland.

Workplace bullying is also defined as the recurrent ill-treatment of one employee who is targeted by one or more employees with a malicious mix of humiliation, intimidation and sabotage of performance (Margaret, 2007). Based on a study by Olweus (1993), bullying is categorized as all adverse action involving acts or attempts that will result in injury or uncomfortable feelings of others. Shapiro, Baumeister, and Kessler (1991) identifies bullying as negative actions, whether done directly by the agent (bullies) on the target or victim in the form of verbal, physical or psychological. Bullying behaviour does not favour one gender over the other (Rigby, 1998), and the act of bullying behaviour includes isolating the victim in the social environment. Social isolation in terms of teasing/mockery, lowering one's self-esteem or social status is commonly practised especially by young women and children. Some of these acts constitute as intentional behaviour in order to show the strength of status or power possessed by the bullies.

However, many previous studies have also pointed out various definitions of bullying. For example, Olweus (1991) defines bullying as a rough relationship between the

powerful individual (the bully) on weaker ones (victims). Yaakub et al. (2001) found that bullying can be physical or spiritual attacks done repeatedly, with the intention to intimidate, create an unpleasant environment or cause feelings of anxiety.

Kendrick's study (1997) states bullying behaviour as an act by an individual or group of individuals who cause misery to the victims by way of threat in terms of victim by a person or a group of bullies. Even the victims will feel that their life is not easy because they cannot stop the bullying activity or fear will happen again (Mellor, 1990). This act of bullying behaviour includes isolating the victim from the social environment (Hazler, R.J., 1996).

Bullying at work are expressed as attack, an intimidating behaviours, spreading of rumours, derogatory or insulting words, disgraceful conduct, abuse of power that will try to topple or break people or other groups / workers which will then will cause victims to suffer or undergo stress (Unison, 1997).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the continuous act of bullying shows that bullying occurs through acts of aggression by individuals known to each other directly. Sometimes these acts occur indirectly where bullies do not show signs acknowledging the act because bullies tend to hide their actions and keep their misdeeds subliminal and are also smart to deny their actions against victims (Azizan, 2004).

## **2.7 Types of Bullying**

The act of bullying could take numerous forms. Zapf et al. (2010) observed that bullying victims tend to experience a large number of bullying behaviours from different

behavioural categories. Direct bullying is recognized as aggressive acts that are aimed directly at the target, for example mocking, admonishment, spreading rumours, and intimidations. Indirect bullying may take the form of social isolation or withdrawal of needed information (Hansen, A. et al., 2006).

This view is supported by Cowie et al. (2000), whose research stated that in an earlier overview of research, Rayner and Hoel (1997) categorized bullying behaviours in the working environment into several kinds, which were intimidation at a professional level (e.g., condescending, public professional humiliation, and accusation regarding lack of effort); threat to personal standing (e.g., name-calling, abuses, intimidation, and debasing with reference to age); seclusion or isolation (e.g., inhibiting access to opportunities, withholding of information, and physical or social isolation); overwork (e.g., unwarranted stress, unmanageable deadlines, and unnecessary interruptions) and finally, destabilization (e.g., work not recognized or rewarded, insignificant responsibilities, elimination of responsibility, repeated reminders of blunders, and setting up to fail).

There are two distinct mannerisms of bullying, one being direct, i.e. verbal or physical aggression while the other less conspicuous, i.e. indirect for instance defamation and insults, holding back information). It can also be perceived between 1) actions that complicate tasks or jobs at work or involve elimination of some or all of their responsibilities, and 2) actions that are primarily person-related (Einarsen, 1999). Social isolation, spreading rumours, defamations, discounting opinions, mocking/rudeness, and unwanted sexual advances are all instances of the latter (Matthiesen, 2006).



Leymann characterized types of bullying as “negative communication, humiliating behaviour, isolating behaviour, frequent changes of task to penalize a person, and violence or threat of violence” and categorized them into five groups. Some researchers applied Leymann’s definition in their research but they coined different names and sets according to their working theme and findings. In Niedl’s study, seven groups of factors were formed for forty five questions and labelled them as “attacking a person’s integrity isolation, direct and indirect critique, sanction by certain tasks, threats, sexual encroachment, and attacking a person’s private sphere” (Niedl, 1995).

Subsequently, Zapf (1999) expanded the spectrum of bullying to six types based on empirical and theoretical evidence. He designed a model to demonstrate and comprehend different types of bullying, highlighting the causes, the consequences and the different kinds of mobbing/bullying acts. In his research regarding the connection concerning mobbing/bullying factors, work content, the general work environment and consequences on wellbeing, Zapf describes 6 main types of bullying common at the workplace, which are bullying by organizational measures (pertaining to work matters), social isolation, attacking the victim's attitudes (private sphere), physical aggression, verbal aggression, and spreading of rumours or gossiping. The design of the questionnaires in this study was based on these acts of bullying. Figure 2.1 presents the types, causes and consequences of bullying, as reported by Zapf (1999).

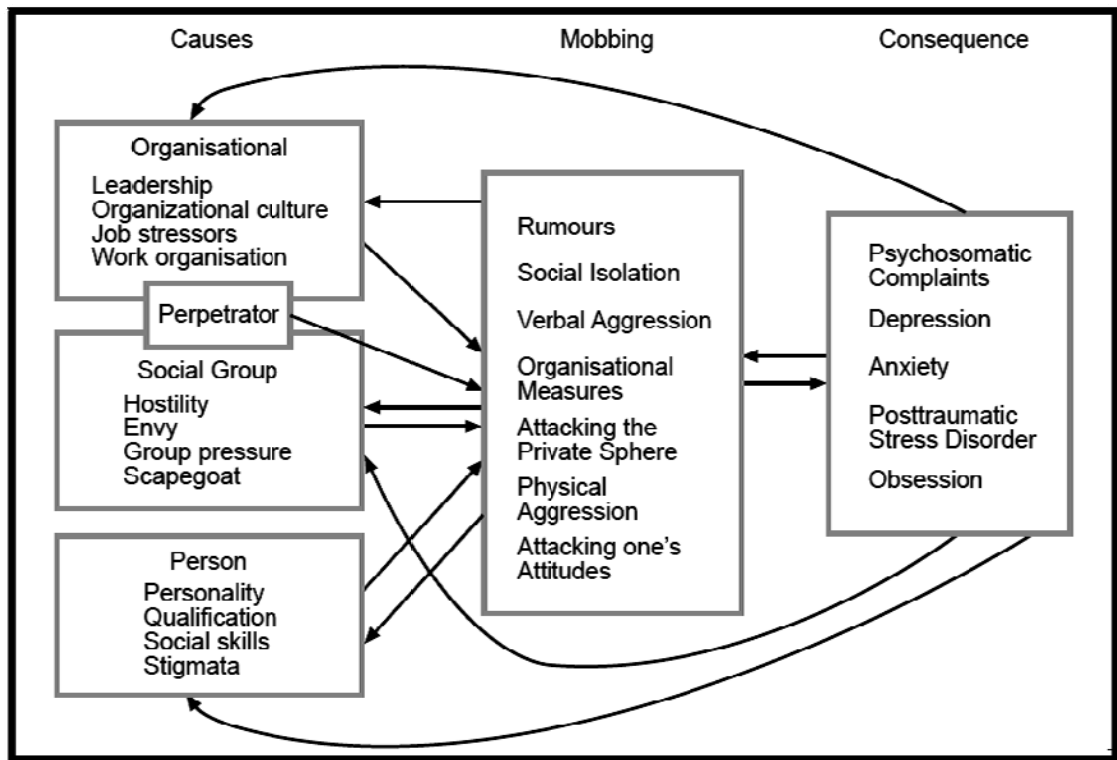


Figure 2.1  
Types, Causes and Consequences of Mobbing/Bullying  
Source: Zapf ,1999

### 2.7.1 Bullying via Organisational Measures

Zapfet al. (1996) coined this term to describe acts of bullying which includes judging a person's job performance wrongly, questioning a person's decisions, or in an insulting way, and allocating demeaning jobs to the potential bully victim. First-hand evidence has proven that the bullying is sparked by conflicts in responsibilities, inadequate work regulation, overburdened workload, low satisfaction with administration, poor social climate, clashes in the work division and administrative reformation or alterations of management (Verdasca, 2011). Based on the study by Hoeland Cooper (1997), states that top management is usually given an enormous workload as well as task assignment with unreasonable deadlines.

Organizational factors that have been identified as potential risk factors include leadership, work organization and job design, and organizational culture and social climate (Salin, 2008).

### **2.7.2 Bullying via Social Isolation**

Social isolation refers to feelings of exclusion from supportive networks (Smith 1998; Smith & Markham, 1998). Social isolation includes: (1) feeling singled out or on display as a representative of a racial, ethnic, and/or gender group; (2) feeling tolerated but not accepted because of one's group; (3) feeling limited to superficial friendships because others cannot relate or need one to translate one's experiences (Smith et al., 2005). Jóhannsdóttir and Ólafsson (2004) found in their study that social isolation is linked to passive submissive strategies for example as feeling powerless and "waiting and hoping" it stops.

### **2.7.3 Bullying via Attacking the Private Sphere**

Zapf (1999) describes this form of bullying as continuously being critical of a one's personal life, ridiculing others, and doubting one to be psychologically troubled. Verdasca et al. (2011) discusses that this form of bullying, which targets personal traits or circumstances, which were common occurrences during their study of the Portuguese banking sector, aims to tear down and demotivate the victim and displays the coercive nature behind the power of bullying.

#### **2.7.4 Bullying via Verbal Aggression**

Edwards and O'Connell (2007) described examples of verbal aggression, such as angry tone of voice, shrieking and screaming, threats directed at the organization, offensive remarks and intimidation. Verbal aggression was described as in Cameron's (1998) study an angry tone of voice was the most typical form of verbal abuse, then shrieking/screaming, threats directed at the organization, offensive remarks.

#### **2.7.5 Bullying Via Physical Violence**

Zapf (1996) mentioned this act as involving threats of physical violence, and minor use of violence. This aggressive form of bullying is quite rare and is on the extreme end of the spectrum and only transpires in unusual circumstances since generally, emotional and psychological violence are the weapons of choice for workplace bullies (Georgakopoulou et al., 2011). Studies by Baron and Neuman (1996) and Geddes and Baron (1997) also suggest that at the workplace, verbal and passive forms of aggression were deemed as more recurrent compared to physical and active forms.

#### **2.7.6 Bullying via Spreading Rumours**

Spreading of rumours at the workplace is simply defined as saying nasty things about a person behind his or her back (Zapf et al., 1996). Subsequently it means to spread malicious tales, or insulting someone by word behind their backs (particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief). This activity which creates a negative working environment and relationship among

colleagues will counter productivity, as stated in Baillienet al. (2009) rumours among employees contribute to the division of co-workers and laid the development of workplace bullying.

## **2.8 Causes of Bullying**

The root cause of bullying depends on several aspects such different personal, organizational, and social factors. Empirical studies on the causes of bullying have concentrated on the personality of the victim, bully and psychosocial factors at work (Einarsen, 1999).

### **2.8.1 Characteristics of Individuals**

Previous studies that have been conducted show that bullies were victims themselves who experienced act of violence or abuse (Corsaro & Eder, 1995; Verlinden et al., 2000). Their main intention when bullying is to seek vengeance. Bullies also feel threatened most of the time and become offensive as a mode of defence. They will take offense before the attack as a justification and support for aggressive behaviour. Bullies are usually comprised of those who are physically strong however insecure about themselves. They have no sense of responsibility for the actions they have done, are often tempted to control and dominate and not be able to understand and appreciate other people (Twemlow, 2000). In the study by Olweus (1993) it was found that bullies usually hurt others around them. Their behaviour produces negative reactions from others. They also provoke and instigate anger and annoyance in others to bully them (Matusova, 1997). Bullies are almost always ready to pick a fight, quick tempered and able to irritate others.

As for characteristics of the victims, there seems to be a contradictory or inconsistency in the qualities that would identify potential victims. Coyne et al. (2000) found that employees that seem to be weak, submissive and anxious and are generally push-overs tend to elicit aggression in others. Other studies, for instance Lutgen-Sandvik (2006) and Namie (2003) state that those who are well liked by others, talented and conscientious seem to irk bullies. Matthiesen & Einarsen (2007) have concluded that there maybe different types of victims, with different pre-existing personality traits.

Other purported indicators include inadequate social or communicative adeptness (Einarsen, Raknes, & Mattheisen, 1994), growing up in a domestically violent home, or being a victim of child abuse (Randall, 2001). If alcohol, drug abuse and aggressive behaviour is a constant in an employees' personal life, it may also determine the occurrence of workplace bullying (Douglas & Martinko, 2001).

As for by-standers, known in some literature as "non-victims", also play a part in the event of bullying. This group are identified as employees who themselves were not violated but whose perceptions, fears and expectations are changed as a result of being vicariously exposed to violence (Barling, 1996). Their indifference and lack of intervention, in addition to the lack of policies, guidelines and rules by the management, allow the continuation and reoccurrence of bullying. Namie (2007) reported that when most employers do nothing or worsen the situation by fostering retaliation against the complainant when notified about a bullying case.

### **2.8.2 Work Environment**

Some organizational cultures practise a more adversarial and aggressive approach to working and social relations that encourages aggressive communication (Hoel & Cooper, 2000). In a previous study, Ariza et al. (2014) identified that the probability to be bullied increases with job insecurity, and bullying is found to a greater extent among people dissatisfied with their jobs and salaries. A stressful environment seems to instigate bullying at the workplace. Forni (2002) claims that stress causes a person to be less considerate and kind to others. It makes one more prone to anger and less tolerant of the mistakes of others.

### **2.9 Acts of Bullying Behaviour Based on Demographic Factors**

Bullying generally refers to negative behaviours committed against individuals or groups. This negative behaviour can occur and relate to gender or ethnic group. In some cases, it also occurs in sexual harassment or racial discrimination (Cowie et al., 2002). Moreover, contemporary workplaces have identified bullying as a significant issue; and that workers from the public sector are more likely to report bullying than in the private sector (Hoel & Cooper, 2001).

#### **2.9.1 Acts of Bullying Based on Gender Differences**

There are consistent discussions about the gender difference in aggressive behaviour. On one hand, some of the researchers found out that the rates of aggressive behaviour and bullying behaviour are much higher among men than women. On the other hand, the other researchers argue that there is no gender difference between males and females, but the form of aggression they use is different.

There is a consensus among social scientists that in terms of bullying, there are many differences as to manners and methods of bullying by males and females, in what fashion are they are bullied, in addition what are the reasons they are bullied. One common difference Farrington (1993) highlights is that physical bullying, such as hitting, kicking and punching, is more common among men, while psychological bullying such as name calling, exclusion, gossip, emotional blackmail and rumour spreading is more distinctive among women.

The differences between direct aggression, whether in physical or verbal form, and indirect aggression, which has a secretive nature and includes such behaviours as gossiping, spreading rumours and social isolation is conclusively distinguished by Smith et al. (2002). Besag (2006) examines how females tend to favour approaches and language to control victims' affairs, and the concealed nature of female aggression.

Besag (2006) also noticed the significant part of communication in young girls' playtime and suggests that the cooperative nature of girls' games is linked to their favoured employment of indirect modes of aggression. Olweus (1978), as cited in Turkel (2007), published a paper in which they found that boys employ more direct physical bullying compared to girls; and that girls tend to favour a more indirect bullying approach, such as gossiping and manipulation of relationship. Physical victimisations, harming others through violence tend to be favoured by males; whereas females opt harming others by damaging their relationships or to employ interpersonal victimisation, (Felix and McMahon, 2006).



Wimmer(2009) has elaborated in her study on gender differences in bullying that women were targeted by bullies more than men, and that most bullies tend to be males than females. She also reported that and males apply direct aggression as in verbal bullying, whereas females lean towards indirect aggression such as emotional bullying. This findingsupports the differences emphasizedby Smith et al. (2002). This view that males normally bully more directly compared to their femalescounterparts is supportedby Turkel (2007) who writes that boys are socialised to be moreaggressive than girls.

Past studies have shown that women are more vulnerable to being bullied as compared to men (Zapf et al., 2003). These findings can be explained by two factors; the first being that women are in less powerful positions and the second, class of women in the study sample may be seen as people who like to get involved in men dominate the culture of the organization (Zapf et al., 2003).

However, there are few studies that observe men in a workplace dominated by women which found that there was an increase in the risk of being bullied at work. Ott (1989) have indicated that althoughin the medical sector, male nurses tend to benefit frombeing minority among female co-workers;the female minority in police teams do indeed experience resistancefrom their male counterpart, highlighting the fact that the female majority in the nursing teams do not react the same way towards men. Ott concluded that varyingstatus of employees played a role in the opposite effects of men and women being in a minority.While the study in Sweden, men in employment were dominated by the women are more at risk for being bullied at work for taking medical leave due to

minor psychiatric problems (Hensing et al., 1994). A study in Britain also showed that male nurses took more sick leave than female nurses (Evans & Steptoe, 2002).

In a national survey in 2007 conducted by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment of Ireland, there are noteworthy variances between genders, where more females reporting isolation, verbal abuse, and being shamed compared to men. In contrast, more males report physical abuse and receiving threats than females (O'Connell, Calvert & Watson, 2007).

However, studies on the frequency of sick leave is not shown on bullying because bullying is an agent or factors that might correlate to the frequency of sick leave and minor psychiatric problems (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003). Therefore this study will look at gender differences among bank employees in the banking sector in Malaysia in terms of bullying in the workplace. However based on the Malaysian Economic Census 2011 (service sector) published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, a total number of 245,780 employees are currently engaged in the banking sector, of which the majority are women. But it depends on the type of work done by them and compatibility of work with gender that reflect the dominant and minority groups.

### **2.9.2 Acts of Bullying Based on Racial Differences**

In a research by the Fire Department from United Kingdom and the United States, Archer (1999) have indicated that women as the minority, equivalent to men of colour (not Caucasian), are prone to bullying in the workplace. Archer has held that individuals

who are being bullied based on the fact that they are among the minority based on gender and race is because of the social stigma that the fire-fighters are men conventionally whites. This was confirmed with a more recent finding by Hoel (2006) in his survey that out of all his respondents, those from ethnic groups (25.2%) were noticeably more likely to be bullied than the white respondents (11.8% ).

Hoel and Cooper, 2000 suggested that members of “non-white” ethnic groups show higher victimisation rates. Cortina et al., 2002, also reports that ethnic minorities also appraise uncivil behaviour as more stressful.

### **2.9.3 Acts of Bullying Based on the Level of Position**

At first glance, it is presumed that there is no chance of managers or employees in high rank to be vulnerable to being bullied as workers of lower posts, based on the powers conferred, and the possibility that they will defend themselves. However, previous studies have states that these factors cannot grant them immunity from being bullied at work, as stated in the study by Leymann(1992) which shows that workers at the top management hierarchy are actually bullied in the workplace. While the study by Hoel and Cooper (2000) have reported that workers among middle management are the most bullied at work. Einarson and others (2003) have indicated that workplace bullying can occur within the positions as well as between different levels of hierarchy.

Although previous studies have shown that workers at the managerial level have been bullied either more or less compared to other workers, it varies based on the severity of the act (Ariza-Montes et al., 2014). As stated previously, bullying among workers at

the management level is more stressful and due to rivalry/competitiveness in nature. Situations such as impossible deadlines and insufficient resources are deemed normal in a working environment. According to a survey conducted in 1997 by the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) revealed that in the last five years one out of eight workers have been victims of bullying while working.

The majority of workers among more than 1,000 who took the survey have experienced bullying by a much higher ranking colleague. 16 percent of workers place the blame on their CEO or managing director. Biased treatment, unnecessary disparagement, openly debasing the victim, ignoring their point of view and continuously shifting or placing impracticable work targets are all classified as typical forms of bullying behaviour (Einarsen, 2000). The IPD survey found that 19 percent of those who were bullied said that as a result of bullying their work performance deteriorated. Almost thirty percent of them lost self-confidence and 20 percent suffered depression.

A national study conducted in Ireland in 2007 indicated that bullying in the workplace commonly ensues using scare tactics rather than giving unreasonable assignments. The organization in the workplace, most reported that supervisors and managers bully other workers (Moore, 2000).

In a research conducted by the Chartered Management Institute, U.K., about two out of 3 managers have observed cases of bullying in the past 3 years, bullying incidents are not just 'top down'; 63 percent of respondents witnessed bullying between peers and 30 percent witnessed subordinates bullying their manager. About 42 percent of managers' report having been bullied themselves and of those who have experienced bullying,

more than 1 in 3 (38 percent) reported that no action was taken by their organisation. (Woodman & Kumar, 2008).

There is also the question of whether the women who represented among the employees at the top were more exposed to bullying at work than men. Previous studies conducted in Scandinavian have indicated that the number of men and women who have been bullied at the workplace are the same (Leymann, 1992; Niedl, 1995; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Vartia, 1996).

However, a study by Hoel and Cooper (2001) has stated that among the managerial level, females are bullied more than their male counterparts. Therefore, this study will attest that bullying is different between men and women in the banking sector in Malaysia.

Studies by Rayner (1997) as well as UNISON (1997) have revealed that in the UK, individuals of higher ranking are identified as offenders in a majority of bullying occurrences. In this light, the burden to ameliorate the current condition lies with the higher management, since a large part of the perpetrators comprise of managers and superiors. However, there have been cases where a considerable number of respondents distinguish a colleague as the culprit (Hoel & Cooper, 2000).

In most situations, whether in the private or the public sector, managers and supervisors are expected to work long and extreme working hours and all at once shoulder accountability and be in charge of human resources. With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that it is common that in the UK, in about 75 percent of incidents, the

suspected bully appears to be someone who has supervisory or managerial responsibilities (Unison, 1997; Hoel, Faragher & Cooper, 2001).

#### **2.9.4 Acts of Bullying Based on Age**

In a national survey conducted in Ireland in 2007, it is stated that for men in the range age 46 to 55 years is at risk of being bullied while women of 25 years and below are more prone to being victimised (O'Connell, Calvert & Watson, 2007). In a study using cross-sectional sample of American adults, Felson (1992) have respondents stated that young people are more predisposed to bully and be bullied.

Hoel and team (2006) had conducted a theoretical analysis assessing the efficiency of an assortment of mediation to wrestle workplace bullying and emphasize on opportunities that the organisations have in averting and handling this problem. It was found that there were no significant differences among workers according to their age group. However, as stated before, the more experienced and mature employees tend to experience more bullying whilst the younger respondents had less exposure.

#### **2.9.4 Acts of Bullying Based on Work Experience**

In general; there are opinions that say that the new employees will be bullied by employees of the old or seniors. O'Connell and Williams (2001) in their study stated that the top and mid management levels were more susceptible to being bullied by others.

Conversely, according to a study conducted by a research team at the University of Bergen; those who have worked longer for an organisation were more likely to be victims of bullying compared to younger employees. The prevalence rate among those between 51 and 60 years of age was 10.3 % (Einarsen S., 2005). Therefore, bullying as reported by these victims were a one-time occurrence or short clash intervals, but rather ongoing circumstances where the victims are bullied repeatedly over time.

## **2.10 Effects of Bullying**

Many studies have given an emphasis on the effect and consequences of bullying in the workplace, whether against individuals or organizations. It is equally high impact if allowed to persist in the long term. It has become an important issue where an effective strategy must be developed and implicated to contain this problem from becoming a dangerous epidemic (Khalib, 2006).

In most research on workplace bullying, negative effects the victims have experienced have been the main focus (Hoel, Einarsen, & Cooper, 2003). Comparable to other methods of peer pressure, bullying is probable to be evident behaviourally as well as via attitude. In 2001, Quine published a paper in which they discovered that nurses who were significantly unhappy with their jobs and above average levels of fretfulness, depression, and inclination to quit were bullied at work. A Finnish research suggests that among hospital staff who had been bullied were 51 per cent, or 1.5 times more likely to be absent due to medical conditions or ailments, compared to the others in the population (Kivimäki, Elovainio & Vahtera, 2000). However there have been other

studies which imply the correlation between bullying, poor constitution and absenteeism to be rather implausible (Einarsen et al., 1994).

Jacob et al. (2001) have found that negative acts or indirect bullying can occur both verbally and also non-verbally. Verbal acts of bullying are employed by using words to intimidate, ridicule, disapprove, mock, and name calling. While non-verbal ways are like making faces, insulting or rude signage, or do not meet the expectations of others. Olweus (1993) describes bullying usually as physical, such as hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, or alienating the other and the like. All types of acts of bullying committed can lead to a fight when the victim respond or defend themselves.

Consequences of bullying, wilful gross actions and a desire to hurt or injure causes victims to suffer from stress (Tattum and Tattum, 1992). Following the study by Farrington (1993) it is also revealed that bullying and gross behaviour towards the victims left a lasting negative effect. Even children who have bullied tend to do the same as a teenager. Similarly, children who had been brutally assaulted will perform the same act as adults (Farrington, 1993).

Besides absenteeism, the act of bullying also affects the physical and mental health of those targeted. Olweus (1993) mentioned that usually when the individual or victim of bullying would tend to avoid going back to the scene of the crime/act. And ensuing this reluctance to be at the venue where the bullying occurred, other symptoms such as fever, depression, isolation, introverted, rebellious and other emotional instability also arises. Victims will experience prolonged depression if there is no support or if the problem cannot be understood by others. Hantler (1994) also states that victims a tremendous



amount of pressure and stress because of the injustice borne by them due to the bullying. The findings by Weinhold (2000) also supports this claim and has found that victims face many problems, and behavioural effects of bullying, such as low self-esteem, insecurity, easily offended, passive and always concerned, sensitive, lack of social skills, quieter, less capacity, unpretentious, speech problems, lack of concentration, angry or react to others and incapable of defending themselves.

Based on Besag's findings (1989), victims of bullying, regardless whether of gender, reported that they experienced depression, such as extreme sadness, loss of capacity and capability in a given area when compared with other colleagues. In addition bullied everyday life with a sense of fear, anxiety and stress as is often observed by the bullies (Slee, 1995).

Sharp and Smith (1994) stated that bullying is a form of harsh treatment that would normally hurt victims deliberately and cause ongoing emotional distress for several weeks, for months or even years. A feeling of uneasiness will overcome them affect their concentration. This would lead to more serious consequences if not dealt with quickly. In the long term, bullying behaviour will cause prolonged pressure on a person and can affect the lives of victims, thus causing injury, death and even suicide even (Farrington, 1994).

A one of its kind study was conducted to examine the relationships among bullying or witnessing bullying at work, self-reported health symptoms, and physiological stress where the physiological stress reactivity of 437 participants were measured as cortisol in the saliva (Hansen et al., 2006). The results indicated that the bullied respondents had

lower social support from co-workers and supervisors, and they reported more symptoms of somatisation, depression, anxiety, and negative affectivity (NA) than did the non-bullied respondents.

Many studies have indicated that bullying is associated with decreased levels of job satisfaction, reduced productivity, increased number of absences, the increase in the number of employees who quit and a commitment to the work of a decreased (Foster et al., 2004; Zapf, 1999).

## **2.11 Conclusion**

This chapter encompassed assessment of past research. Articles were adapted to build the theoretical framework and proposition development. The outcomes and discussions of past academic works are referred to create a foundation for the propositions and relationship between the dependant and independent variables.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section will describe the research framework which includes hypotheses/propositions development, research design, operational definition, measurement of variables/instrumentation, data collection (sampling, data collection procedures and techniques of data analysis). The sample of study is the employees from the banking sector from all levels of office, age and level of work experience in three branches. These branches are the Lebuhraya branch and Jelutong branch in Penang as well as the Bakar Arang branch in Sungai Petani. Data collected through questionnaires were aimed at gauging the significant relationship between bullying in the workplace and target groups demographics.

Planning for this study began in May 2011. Governing the work of questionnaires to measure the level of bullying at work started only after maternity leave of the researcher, in May 2012 after obtaining written permission from RHB Bank Bhd.

#### **3.2 Research Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study, as shown in Figure 3.1, was based on key concepts identified in the literature review, mainly adapted from Zapf (1999), but in this instance to examine the correlation between bullying in the workplace in terms of demographic factors. Bullying at the workplace is identified as negative behaviour via personal attack with the intention to berate a person's work

and to impose physical violence. This study will determine whether independent variables have a significant relationship with workplace bullying.

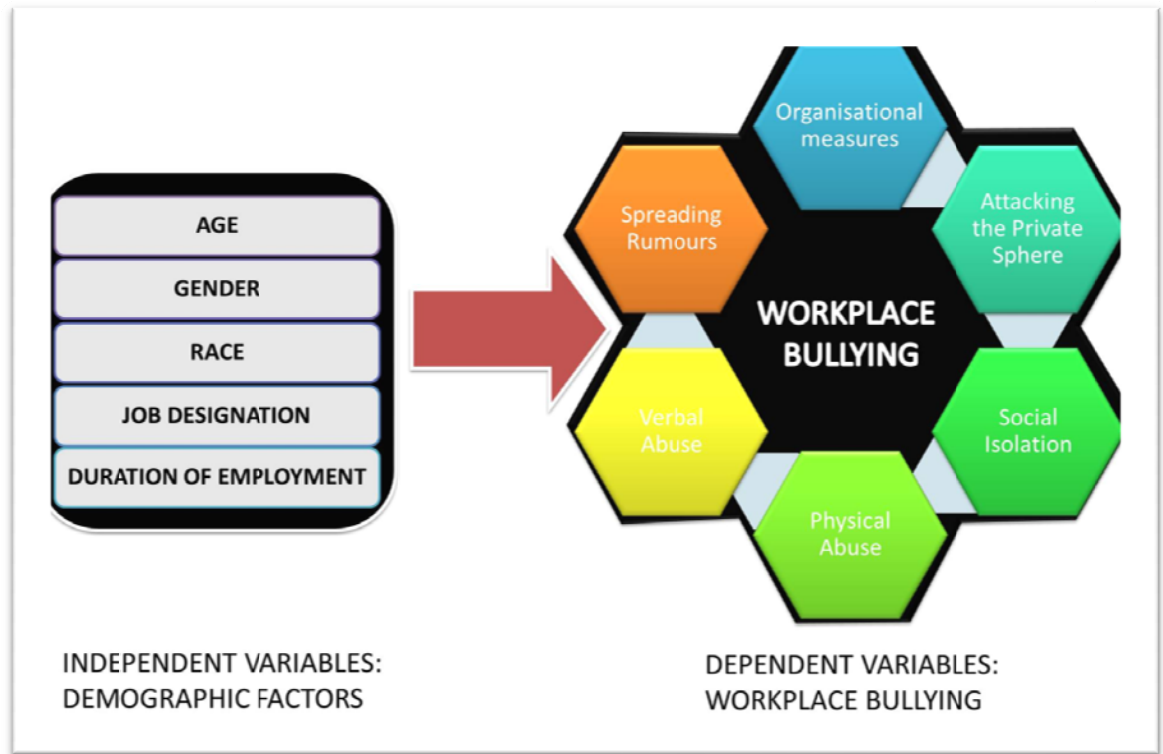


Figure 3.1  
*Theoretical Framework*

In the previous chapter, Figure 2.1 which was an excerpt from Zapf (1999) illustrated the causes and consequences of mobbing/bullying. Six bullying/ mobbing scales were highlighted in Zapf et al. (1996), namely organisational measures, social isolation, attacking the private sphere, verbal aggression, physical aggression and lastly, spreading of rumours. These scales were adopted in this study to identify the types of bullying that occur among the target group.

The first scale, identified as mobbing or bullying by organisational measures such as confiscating responsibilities or not appreciating one's work and contributions, next was social isolation, which included totally ignoring the victim. Attacking the private sphere including debasing a person's personal life, ridiculing them was the third scale. Next was verbal aggression, which included shouting or using profanity at someone, as well as verbally threatening them, was the fourth scale. The fifth scale was physical aggression, which comprised of risk of bodily harm, and minor use of violence. The final scale was spreading gossip, which involved talking behind one's back (Zapf, D., 1999). Similar definitions were also coined by Einarsen and Skogsta (1996).

### 3.3 Research Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework stated above, the hypothesis designed is as shown in the list below:

List of research hypothesis

- H<sub>01</sub>      There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of bank employees' gender
- H<sub>02</sub>      There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of bank employees' race
- H<sub>03</sub>      There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of bank employees' position at work
- H<sub>04</sub>      There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of bank employees age
- H<sub>05</sub>      There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of bank employees' work experience

### **3.4 Research Design**

Research design incorporates the methodology and procedures employed to conduct the research project. The research project is planned based on a quantitative approach by collecting, examining numerical data and applying statistical analysis (Hair, Money, Samouel & Page, 2007).

This project paper has used descriptive and correlation analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristic of population or phenomena (Zikmund, 2003). Correlation analysis was done to analyse the main hypothesis and to determine whether the independent variables in this study; age, gender, race, job designation, and duration of service; have any significance in workplace bullying.

### **3.5 Operational Definition**

#### **3.5.1 Workplace Bullying**

The definition of bullying in a nutshell focuses on negative acts transpiring frequently over certain duration, and from which the victim finds it challenging to defend themselves (Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994; Einarsen, 1996). There are various terminologies that have been used in explaining bullying in the workplace.

Most of the expressions on bullying are taken from the studies in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and Northern Europe, where researchers use the term 'mobbing' in their studies. Other terms used are aggressive behaviour in the workplace (work place aggression), gross behaviour against an employee (employee abuse), 'victimization' and hostile workplace among colleagues (workplace incivility among others) (Khalib, 2006).

### **3.5.2 Demographic Variables**

Demographic variables stated here would encompass personal factors of the target group such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, designation of work and duration of employment.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

Investigation of workplace bullying was usually conducted with the use of a questionnaire, whereby it helps recognize the problem and the different forms that it takes (Cowie et al., 2002). The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from the NAQ (Negative Acts Questionnaires) developed by Einarsen and Rakness (1997) in a study of harassment in the workplace. Some minor changes were made, for example inappropriate questions for this particular target group were omitted. Questionnaires for this study are shown in Appendix 1.

In part A of the questionnaire, respondents were required to provide background information that includes gender, race, level of position, age and work experience. These demographic variables were then used to assess its correlation with the different types of bullying.

Part B of the questionnaire consists of 20 items, regarding six types of negative behaviours in the workplace, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Distribution of Items by Type of Bullying In the Workplace*

Item	Negative behaviours in the workplace
2,4,9,10,12,14,16	Organisational measures
1,13	Social isolation
7,8,18,17,15	Attacking the private sphere
5,6	Verbal aggression
19,20	Physical aggression
3, 11	Spreading of rumours

Likert Scale 1,2,3 and 4, respectively meaning " Never ', ' Sometimes ', often time' and 'Always' is used to measure the frequency of negative behaviours experienced by the respondents in the workplace.

Researchers have interpreted the original instrument in English to Bahasa Malaysia. Next, the researchers have interpreted these instruments from Bahasa Malaysia to English and compare with original instruments in English version.

### 3.6.1 Measurements of Variables

Cronbach's Alpha method was used to measure the reliability of the questions posed in the questionnaire that has been prepared. In theory, when alpha is equivalent to 0, it signifies that there is no correlation between the score, whereas when alpha is equivalent to 1, it confirms perfect correlation between the score (Polit & Beck, 2008). According to Santos (1999), an alpha value above 0.7 validates the acceptable level of reliability of the questions posed.



In addition to that, to guarantee that the questions in the designed questionnaire s able to derive the desired information and to pinpoint any weaknesses, this Cronbach Aloha test is carried out.

In this pilot test, about 20 (n)respondents' feedback were collected randomly according to convenience of time and location. The results are shown in Table 3.2. Theacceptable level of consistency and the instrument measures the variables accurately are proven as shown in the values of Cronbach's Alpha test.

Table 3.2  
*Pilot Test - Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability)*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
.698	.848

Table 3.3  
*Cronbach's Alpha for Pilot Test (Item-Total Statistics)*

PILOT TEST		Cronbach's Alpha Score
<b>Bullying Behaviour</b>	Organisational Measure	.879
	Social Isolation	.858
	Attacking the Private Sphere	.793
	Verbal Abuse	.777
	Physical Abuse	.811
	Spreading Rumours	.760
<b>WorkplaceBullying</b>		.768

As shown in the tables above, the Cronbach's Alpha values range of 0.768 to 0.879 which indicates having a high internal consistency reliability measurement.

### **3.7 Data Collection**

#### **3.7.1 Primary Data**

Attainment of primary data in this research was accomplished through distribution of questionnaires to employees of RHB Bank Bhd. who were the main respondents.

#### **3.7.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data are existing information, collected by other researchers/users apart from the researcher. These data refers journals of past research works, articles from media, relevant websites, as well as other periodicals from e-libraries.

#### **3.7.3 Sampling**

This project paper is a correlation study which was aimed at identifying dependant variables which has a significant relationship with workplace bullying.

#### **3.7.4 Target Population**

The purpose of a survey is to provide statistical information of the characteristics of a target population (Fowler Jr, F. J., 2013). . In research, target population is the entire set of units for which the survey data is to be used to make inferences. It can also be defined as the eligible population that is included in research work. The target population for this research were RHB Bank Bhd. employees working at the Lebuhpantai and Jelutong branch as well as the BakarArang branch in Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaysia. The research was limited to RHB bank employees only mainly due to the fact that the researcher did not receive any feedback from the other bank branches, namely CIMB Bank Bhd., Maybank Berhad, Public Bank Berhad, BSN Berhad, Bank Islam Berhad and Bank Muamalat. Conversely, narrowing the target group to a certain type of bank

ensured the working environment, company policies, work ethics and culture are the same for the participants, i.e. the same organizational conditions (Deniz, N., & Guten Ertosun, O., 2010).

### **3.7.5 Sampling and Sampling Technique**

Sample size is the number of respondents to be included in the study which consists of 100 employees. From the total of 100 questionnaires distributed, 76% response rate was achieved (76 responded). Thus, the analysis will be based on the data from this total number of questionnaires.

There are two techniques on how to collect a sample, which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Levy, P. S., & Lemeshow, S., 2013). Non-probability sampling is a method where samples are collected in a way that does not give all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected, and are selected depending on their accessibility (Hair et al., 2006).

The sampling method used in this research project is convenience sampling which is under non-probability sampling. This is a sampling procedure used to obtain data from those persons who were easily available. The sample size was more than 30 people and about 500 people; in line with most studies in which the sub-sample of each category is at least 30 people (Roscoe, 1975 in Sekaran, 1992).

### **3.7.6 Data Collection Procedures**

Primary data collection method was applied in this research. It used first-hand data collected through survey questionnaires. The data acquiring process was divided into a few steps; namely, identification of areas for questionnaire distribution, distribution of questionnaires, reminding respondents of questionnaire dateline, gathering of questionnaire and analysing of data.

Initially, the researcher had called and mailed to several banks throughout Penang, detailing the research objectives and a copy of the survey as well as an official letter requesting permission to conduct the survey. However, out of 4 banks (Maybank Berhad, CIMB Berhad, Public Bank Berhd and RHB Berhad), only RHB Bank Berhad was willing to cooperate. Questionnaires were distributed to the three aforementioned branches, to En. Poh Kean Wah (Lebuh Pantai Branch), En. Chin (Jelutong branch), En. Frankie Choong (Sg. Petani Bakar Arang branch). The researcher had prepared 100 copies for each branch, however not all employees were available or willing to spare the time to fill up the survey. They were given three days then feedback was collected. Lebuh Pantai branch returned 31 surveys, Julutong branch returned 25 while the Bakar Arang branch returned 20 completed questionnaires.

### **3.7.7 Techniques of Data Analysis**

Data and information obtained from the questionnaires was processed by descriptive statistical procedures. Once feedback was obtained from the distributed questionnaires, it was analysed using the software "Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19 on Windows 7.

Statistical tests used in this study include Frequency analysis, Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha), Pearson Correlation and Hypothesis Testing

### **3.7.8 Frequency Distribution**

The purpose of frequency distribution is to acquire the number of replies related to diverse parameters of variable and generate values in the form of percentage.

### **3.7.9 Cronbach's Alpha**

Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability (SPSS FAQ, 2015). An Alpha coefficient within the range of 0.9 to 0.8 suggests that the items have relatively high internal consistency, whereas that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered "satisfactory" in most social science research situations. Simply put, as the coefficient nears 1.0, the reliability consistency is higher (Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R., 2011). Basically, most literature has defined the Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) with the following measures as mentioned in Lance, C.E. et al (2006):

- $\alpha \geq 0.9$  Excellent
- $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$  Good
- $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$  Acceptable
- $0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$  Poor
- $\alpha < 0.5$  Unacceptable

### **3.7.10 Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis testing used by to accept or reject statistical hypotheses, and it is initially assumed that the null hypothesis is true. The hypothesis testing was done using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. If the observed data is greater than the critical value, then the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

### **3.7.11 Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

The Pearson Correlation coefficient is a statistical procedure for examining the significant relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. For this project paper, the relationship between demographic factors as the independent variables and workplace bullying as dependent variable were tested.

The values of correlation coefficient ranges from  $-1$  to  $+1$ , where positive values of correlation coefficient specify an inclination of one variable to increase or decrease together with another variable (Wang, J., 2013). Values which are closer to 1, i.e. 0.7-0.9 are deemed as having a very significant relationship while values further away from 1, i.e. 0.1 – 0.09 are considered insignificant.

## **3.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter the theoretical and philosophical assumptions as well as the technical aspects underlying the research methodology in the in this study were reviewed. In addition, a discussion of the research design for this study was made. The next chapter will therefore deal with the presentation and analysis of the results followed by the discussion of the findings.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

Responses from the questionnaires from the respondents were compiled and the data analysed. This chapter describes the data analysis is in 3 parts, part 1 describes the background of the respondents. Part 2 outlines the frequency of bullying behaviour that occurs at the workplace of the test subjects. Part 3 examines if there is a significant relationship between workplace bullying among bank employees based on demographics. Part 4 will ensue with discussion of the findings. All data analysis was done using statistical methods, using the program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.

### 4.2 Background of Respondents

A total of 76 questionnaires collected from respondents from all three RHB Bank branches. The Lebuhr Pantai branch made up 40.7% of the total feedback received. This was followed by the RHB Jelutong branch with 33% respondents and finally the RHB Bakar Arang branch recording 26.3% of total respondents. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents according to each branch.

Table 4.1  
*Number of Respondents*

<b>BANK BRANCH</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Lebuhr Pantai, Penang	31	40.7
Jelutong, Penang	25	33.0
Bakar Arang, Sungai Petani	20	26.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.2.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. Total number of male respondents was 35 (46.1%) and the number of female respondents was 41 (53.9%).

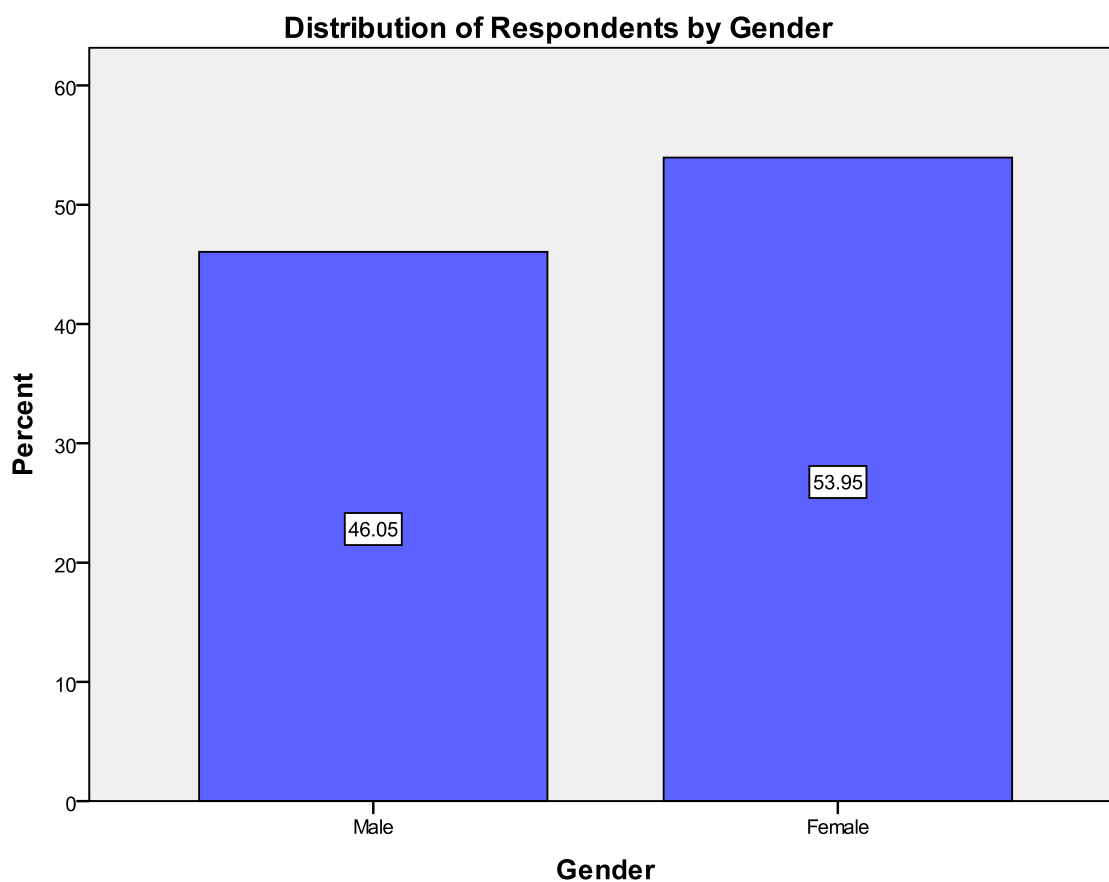


Figure 4.1  
*Distributions of Respondents by Gender*

#### 4.2.2 Distribution of Respondents According to Race

Distribution of respondents by race showed that the respondents were Malays highest number of respondents, 44 (57.9%), followed by the Chinese with 27 people (35.5%), 5 Indian respondents (6.6%) whilst no other races were recorded, as shown in Figure 4.2



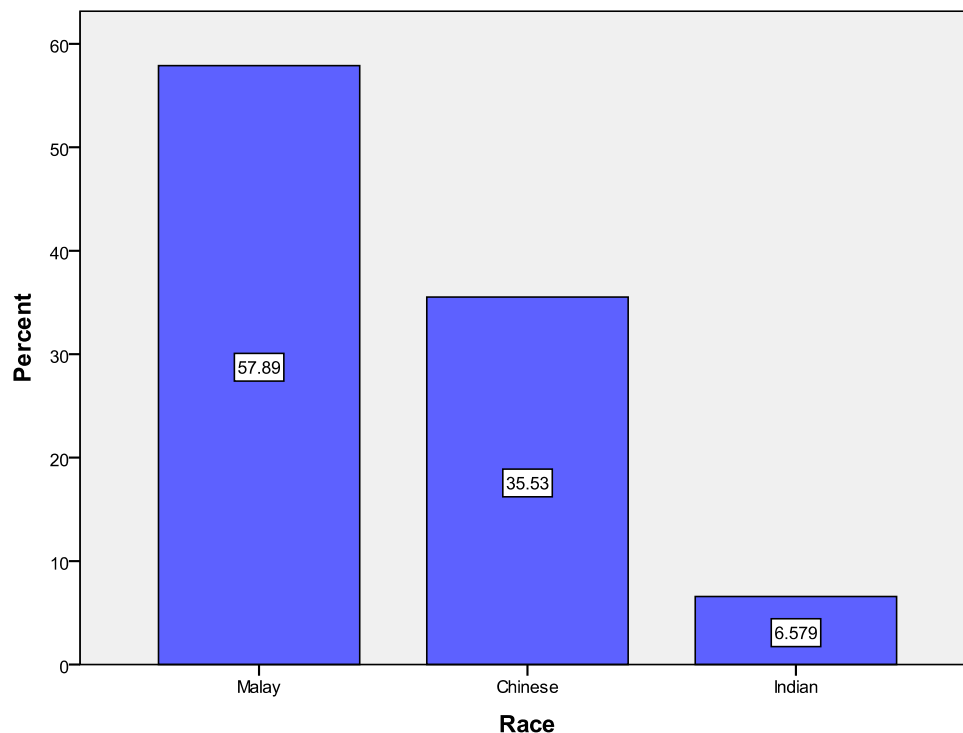


Figure 4.2  
*Distributions of Respondents According to Race*

#### **4.2.3 Distribution of Respondents According to Hierarchical Organization.**

Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of respondents according to their job designation. Support staff represents clerks, tellers, customer service officers, office boy and the like. Respondents from this group appear to hold majority of up to 52.6 per cent. This is followed by 44.7 per cent of staff from the middle management, who represents bank executives and assistant bank managers. Among all respondents, only two employees were from higher management, which makes up 2.6 per cent of the entire population.

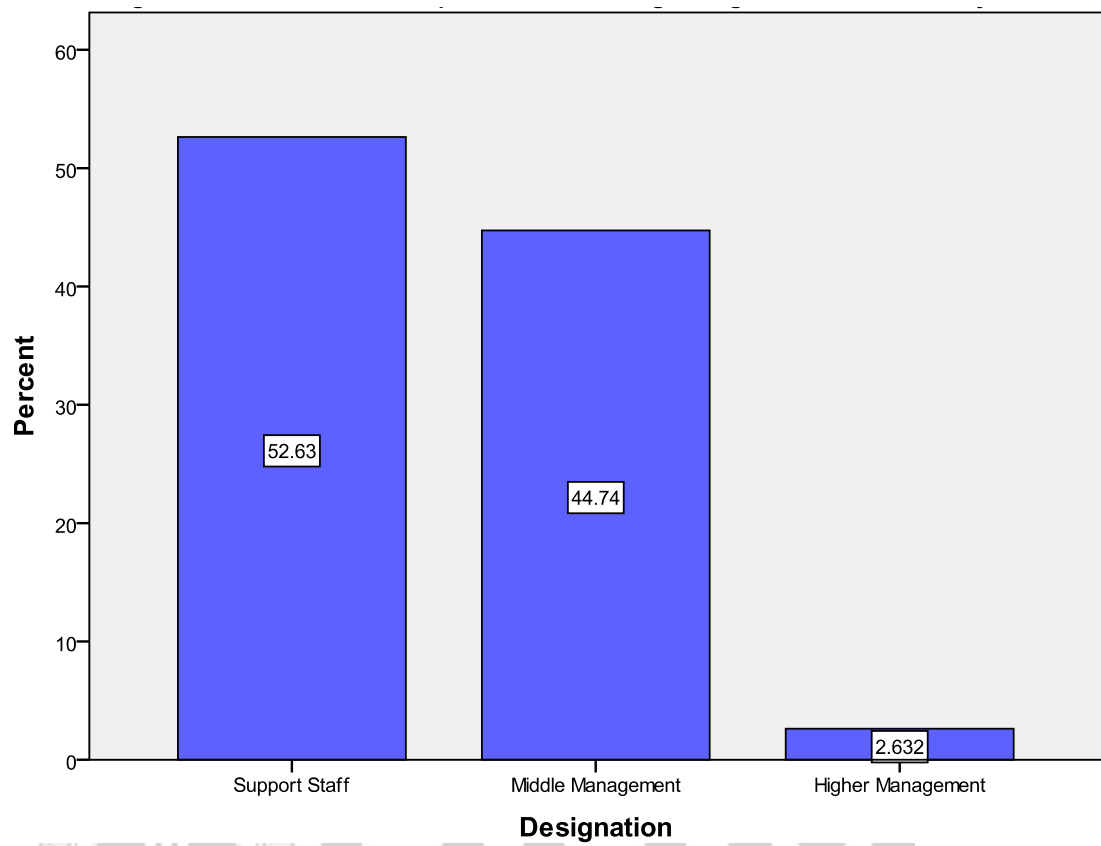
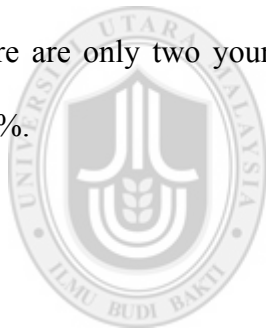


Figure 4.3  
*Distributions of Respondents According to Organisational Hierarchy*



#### **4.2.4 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Age**

Distribution of respondents according to their age showed respondents aged between Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of respondents according to their age. It appears that most RHB bank employees who took part in the survey were mostly in their thirties. About 22 respondents which were about 28.9 per cent of the population were between 36 to 40 years old, while 21 respondents were between thirty one to thirty five year olds, which is about 27.6 per cent. The third highest age group of the population consist of 12 employees (15.8%) from the age of 46 to 50 years old, followed by 8 (10.5%) employees aged 26 to 30 years. There are 6 employees between the ages of 41 to 45 which represent 7.9% of the total population. 6.6 % of the respondents are considered seniors, with their age ranging from 51 to 55 whereas there are only two young employees aged 20 to 25 years which consist of merely 2.6%.



**UUM**  
Universiti Utara Malaysia

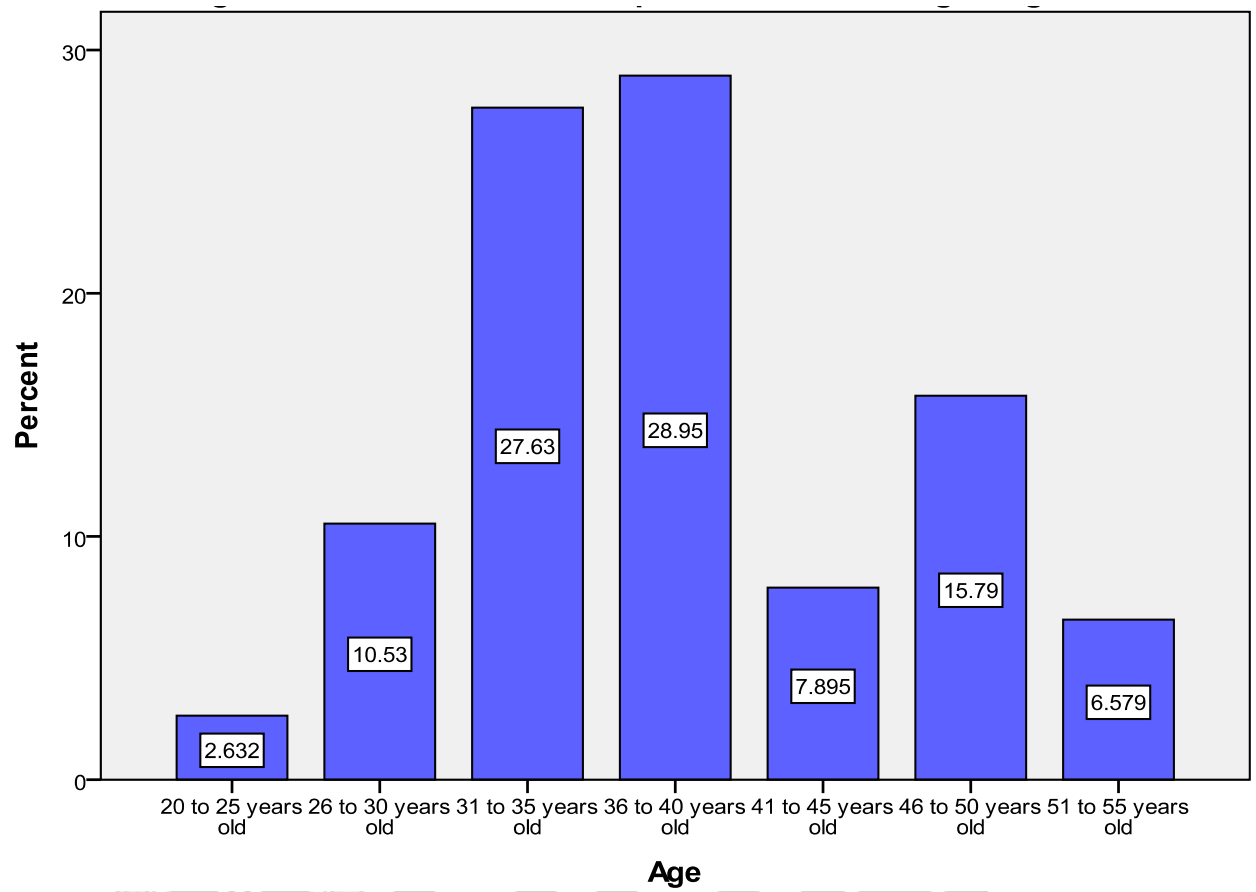


Figure 4.4  
*Distributions of Respondents According to Age*



#### 4.2.5 Distribution of Respondents According to Duration of Service

Distribution of respondents according to work experience shows that respondents had between 6 to 10 years is the highest number of 19 (25.0%). A total of 12 (15.8%) respondents had 1 to 5 years' experience. A total of 10 (13.2%) of respondents who have experience of 11 to 15 years. A total of 17 (22.4%) respondents had 16 to 20 years' experience. A total of 6 (7.9%) respondents had 21 to 25 years' experience. A total of 12 people (15.8%) respondents have been in the industry for 26 years or more. Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of respondents according to their years of service in the bank.

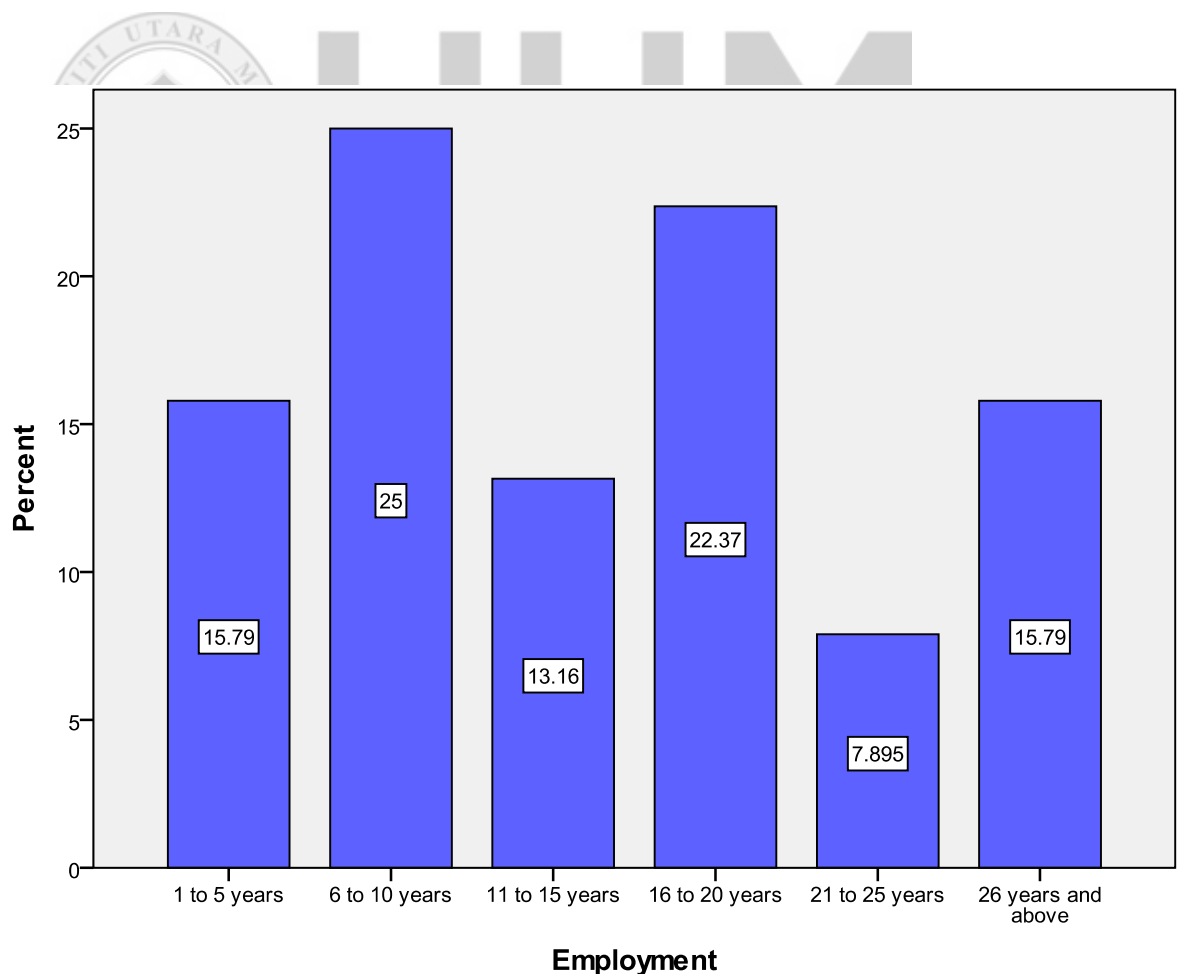


Figure 4.5

*Distributions of Respondents According to Duration of Service*

### **4.3 Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation and variance were applied to describe the responses for the dependable variables.

#### **4.3.1 Bullying via Organisational Measures**

As stated in the previous chapter, six bullying scales were reported in Zapf et al. (1996), namely organisational measures, social isolation, attacking the private sphere, verbal aggression, physical aggression and lastly, spreading of rumours. These scales were adopted in this study to identify the types of bullying that occur among the target group, according to their gender, race, designation, age and duration of employment.

In this section of chapter 4, discussion will commence according to each bullying act. First with bullying via organisational measures, or in other words, undermining an employees' work and performance at the office.

First item under this type of bullying is being pressured to resign, with the mean of 1.2632, standard deviation of 0.57430 and a variance of 0.330. Next would be consistently being watched or monitored, to the point of having no freedom or peace of mind while working. Almost half, about 48.7%, of the population claim that they have never experienced this scenario before. The mean was reportedly 1.6447, standard deviation of 0.57430 and a variance of 0.552. About 76.3% of employees were never subjected to ridicule in terms of work whilst 18.4 of them sometimes do.

This act has a mean of 1.3026 and standard deviation of 0.61144. Among all act of bullying in terms of work, most employees state that they are given unmanageable work load and unreasonable deadlines. The mean value is the highest compared to

the rest in this group, with 1.8158. About 30.3% of the population claim to experience doing work beneath ones' station, with a mean of 1.4079, and had work information withheld from them sometimes, with a mean of 1.4342. 77.6% have been pressured not to claim what they are entitled to, for instance medical or compassionate leave. The mean for this occurrence is only 1.2632, whereas 72.4% reported never having their work criticized continuously, with only 25.0% experiencing this with a mean of 1.3158.



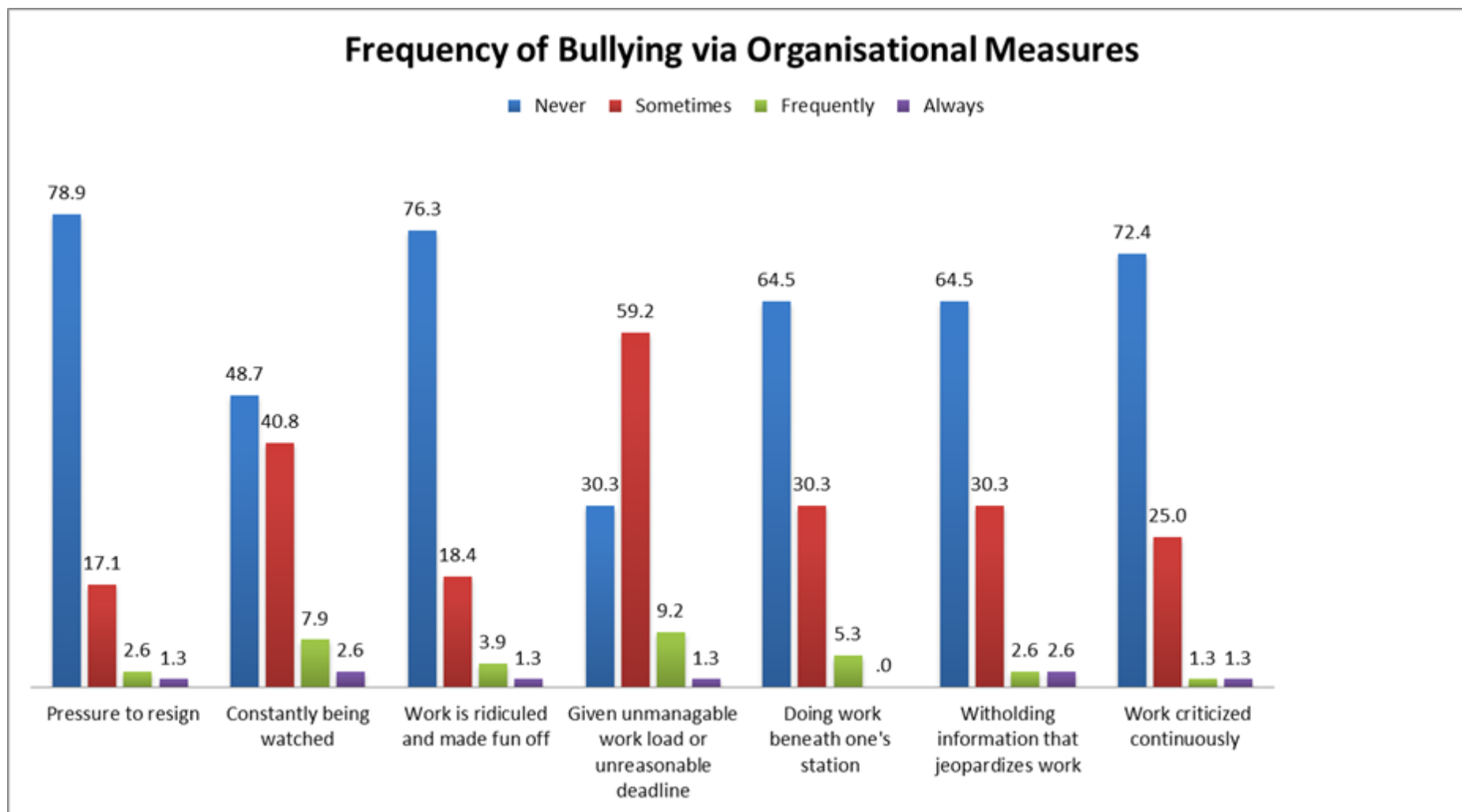


Figure 4.6  
*Frequency of Bullying via Organisational Measures*



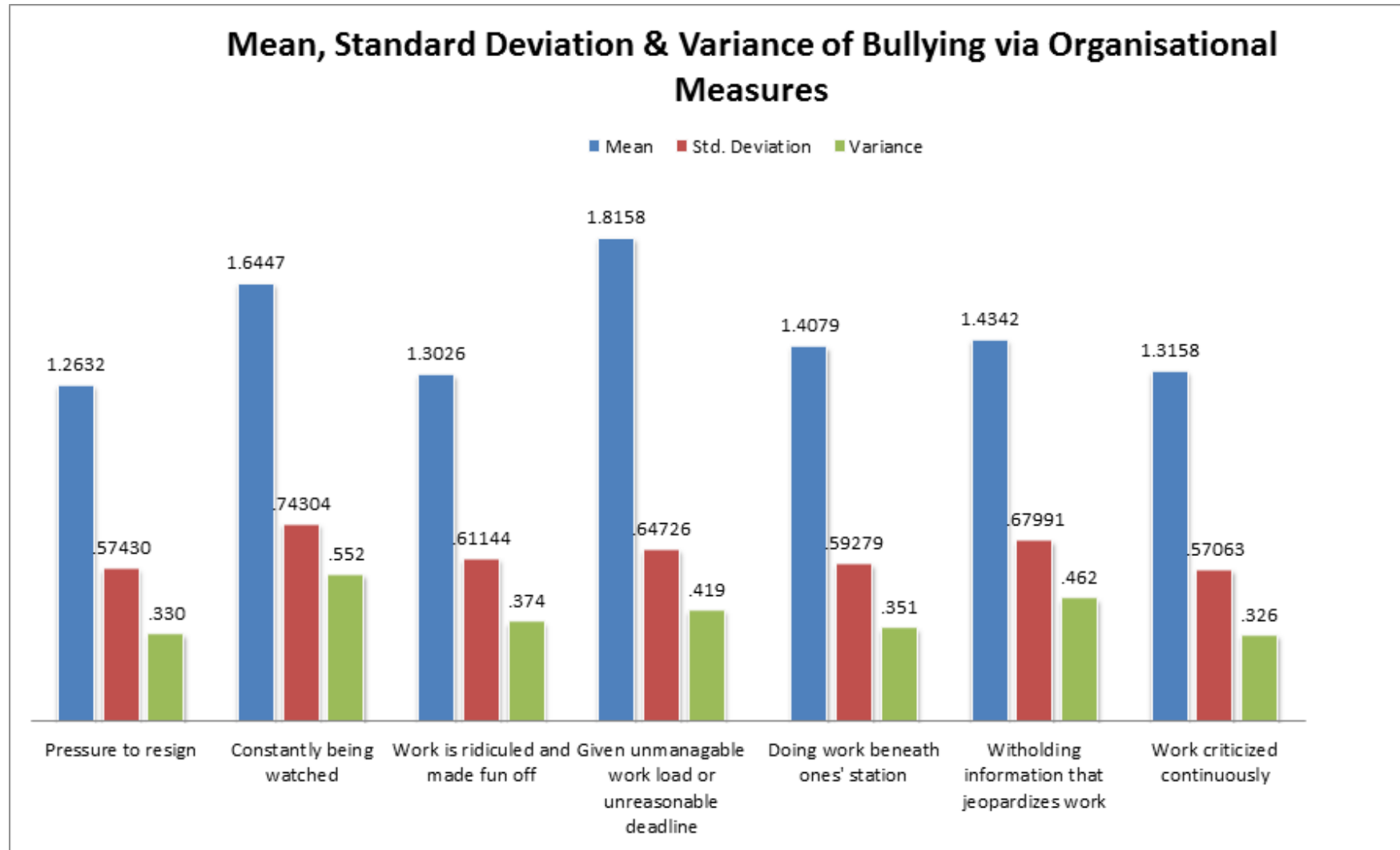


Figure 4.7  
*Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance of Bullying via Organisational Measures*

#### **4.3.2 Bullying via Social Isolation**

Another indirect bullying act is characterized by attempting to socially isolate the victim. From the analysis, more employees' feel that their opinions were sometimes ignored (73.7%), however more of them (80.3%) claim never to have felt excluded from the group, perhaps during lunch or a team meeting. This shows that the mean value for opinions being ignored 2.0263, which is the highest recorded compared to all other bullying behaviour in the survey, while the mean for being excluded from the group only about half of that, which is 1.2237. This result is shown Figure 4.8.



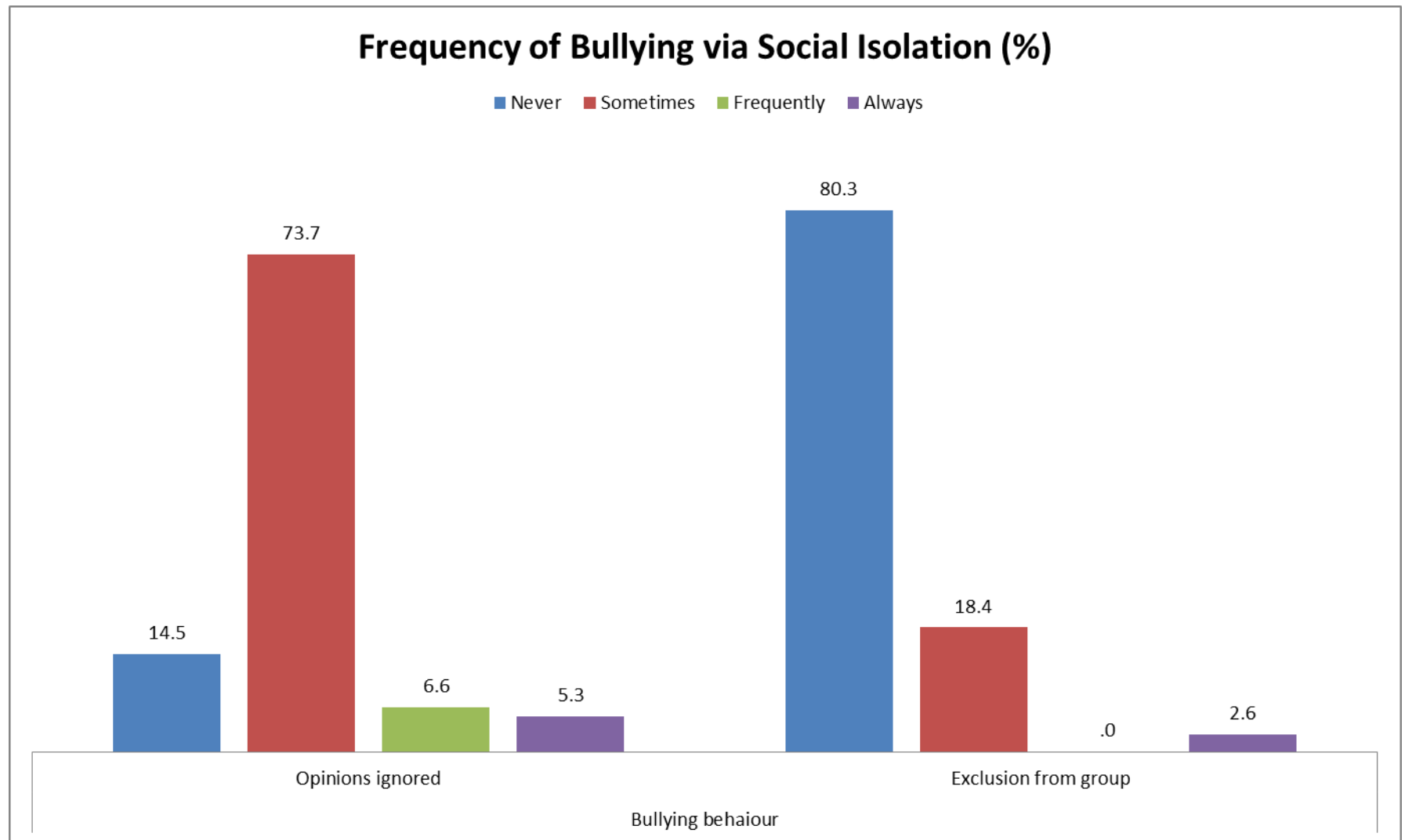


Figure 4.8  
*Frequency of Bullying via Social Isolation*

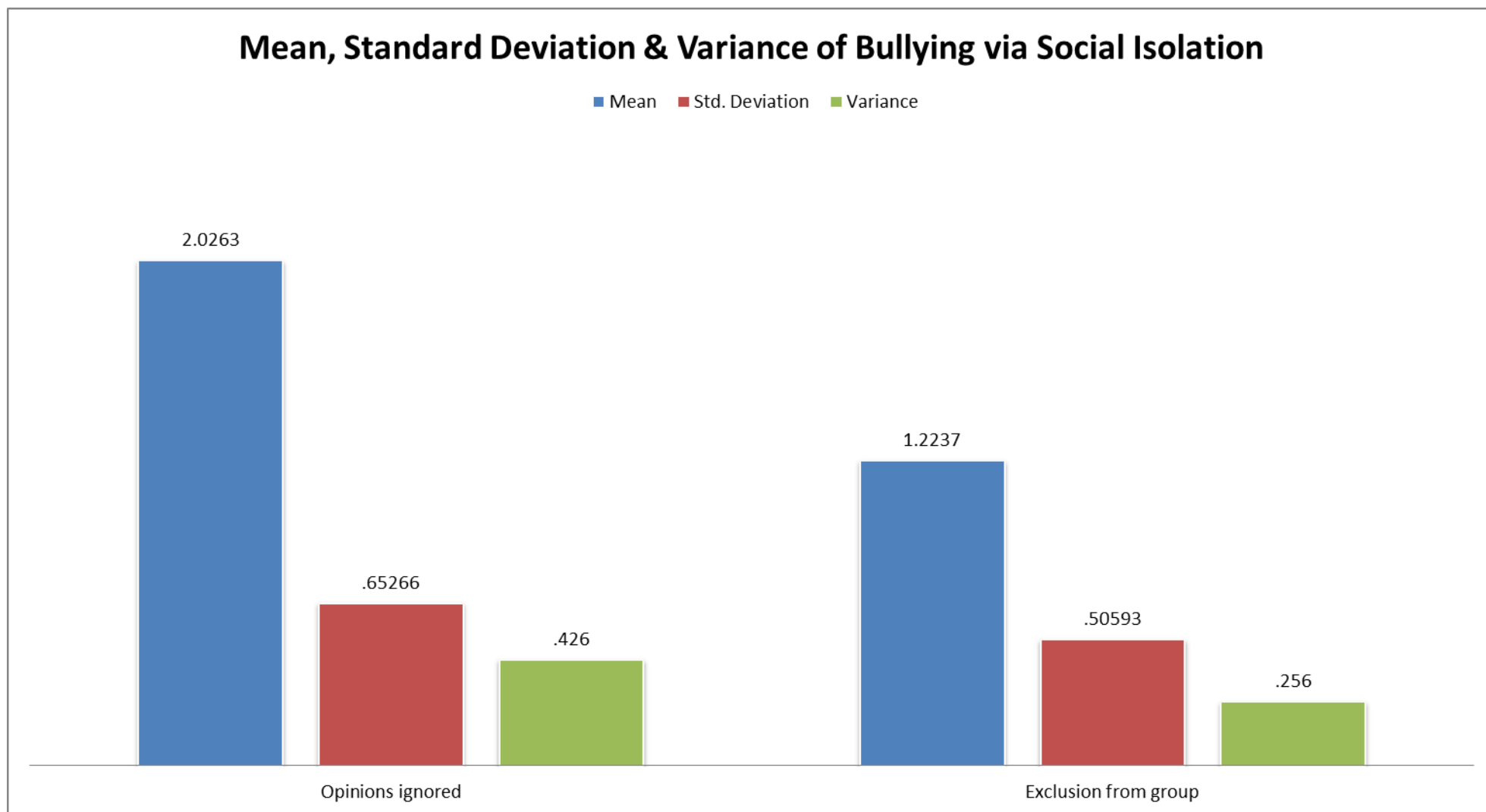
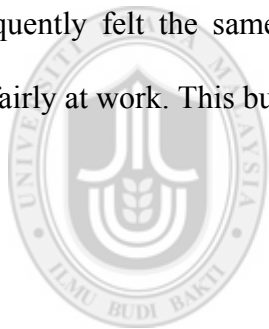


Figure 4.9  
*Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance of Bullying via Social Isolation*

#### **4.3.3 Bullying via Attacking the Private Sphere**

The next scale evaluated was attacking the private sphere which involved perpetually critiquing a person's personal life, making a person appear rash or irresponsible, and suspecting a person to be emotionally troubled.

Among all acts listed in this scale, most employees have never (84.2%) or only occasionally (15.8%) were threatened by others at work in front of their colleagues. About 3.9% of them, which carries a mean of 1.6184, felt that they were teased, harassed and made fun of excessively. Only 21.1% which is about 16 people were yelled at during work, with a mean value of 1.2368, whereas 77.6% of them never had such treatment. 39.5% were sometimes treated unfairly, while 10.5% claim they frequently felt the same however about 48.7% never have felt they were treated unfairly at work. This bullying behaviour has a mean of 1.6447.



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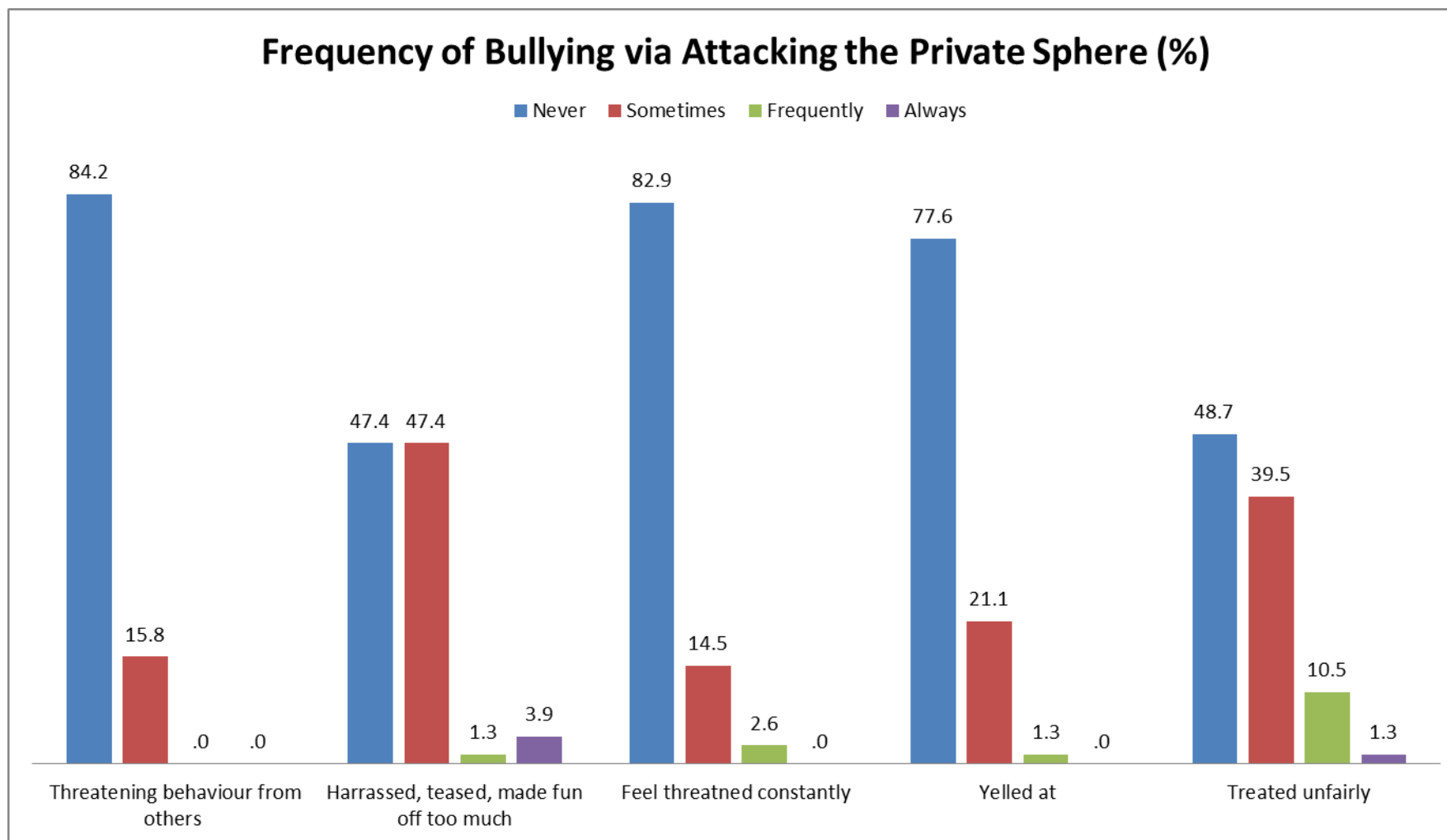


Figure 4.10  
*Frequency of Bullying via Attacking the Private Sphere*

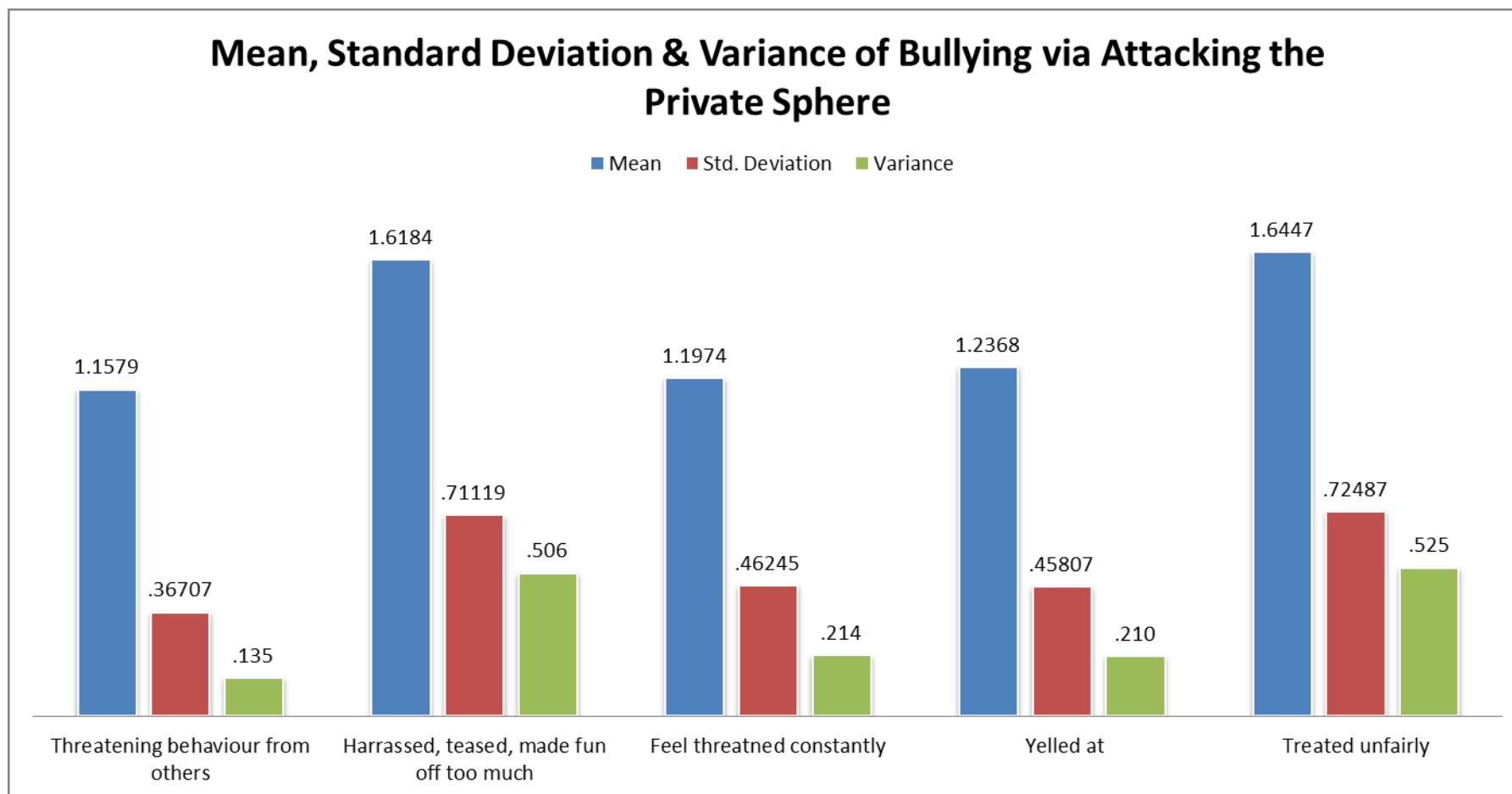


Figure 4.11

*Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance of Bullying via Attacking the Private Sphere*

#### **4.3.4 Bullying via Verbal Aggression**

The fourth scale in the survey was verbal abuse, which comprised of yelling or using profanity at someone, as well as verbally threatening them. Under this category, two separate scales were set; to be treated rudely (spoken to harshly) and to be verbally abused. According to the descriptive statistics, more employees experienced rude verbal treatment compared to direct verbal abuse. Only 3.9% were reportedly always treated rudely, most probably on a daily basis, 2.6% of them frequently, about 20 people (26.3%) experienced rude treatment sometimes while a majority of the population (67.1%) never encountered such treatment from colleagues or superiors.

A larger majority of 69 employees, which makes up 90.8%, have been fortunate to have never experiences any onslaught of verbal abuse. A mean of 1.1447 was calculated for this occurrence, with a standard deviation of 0.50870.

Figure 4.12 illustrates the frequency, mean, standard deviation and variance of bullying via verbal aggression.



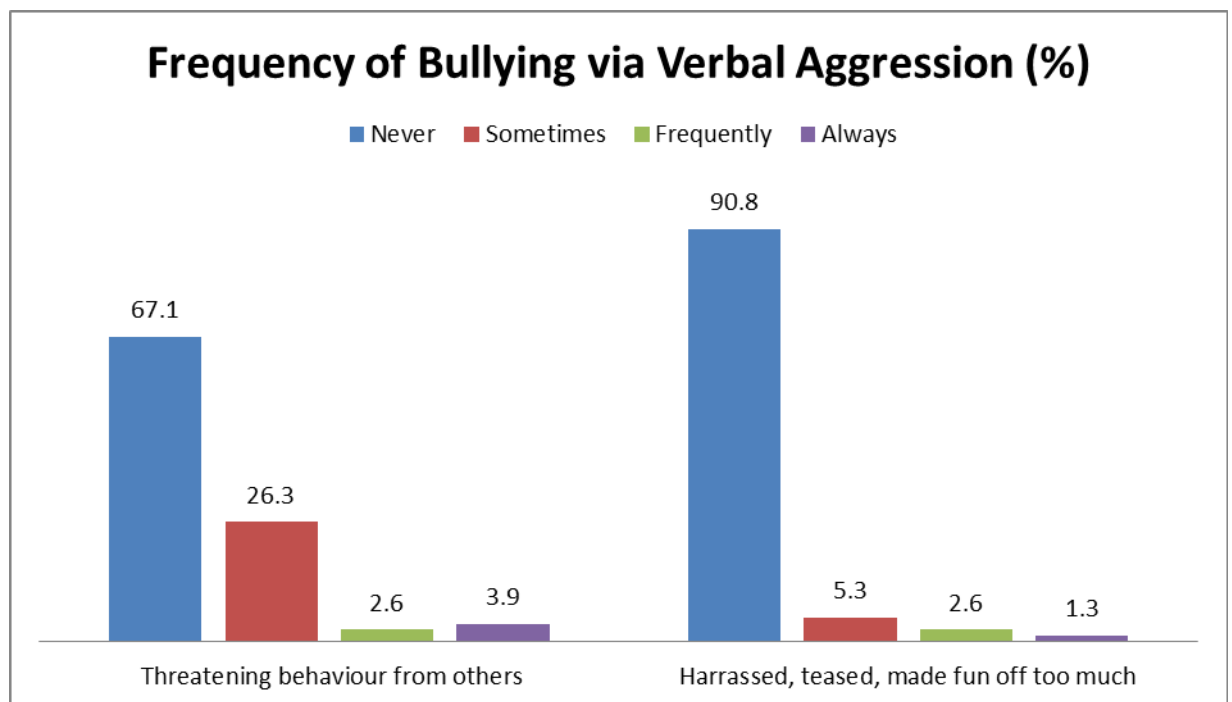


Figure 4.12  
*Frequency of Bullying via Verbal Aggression*

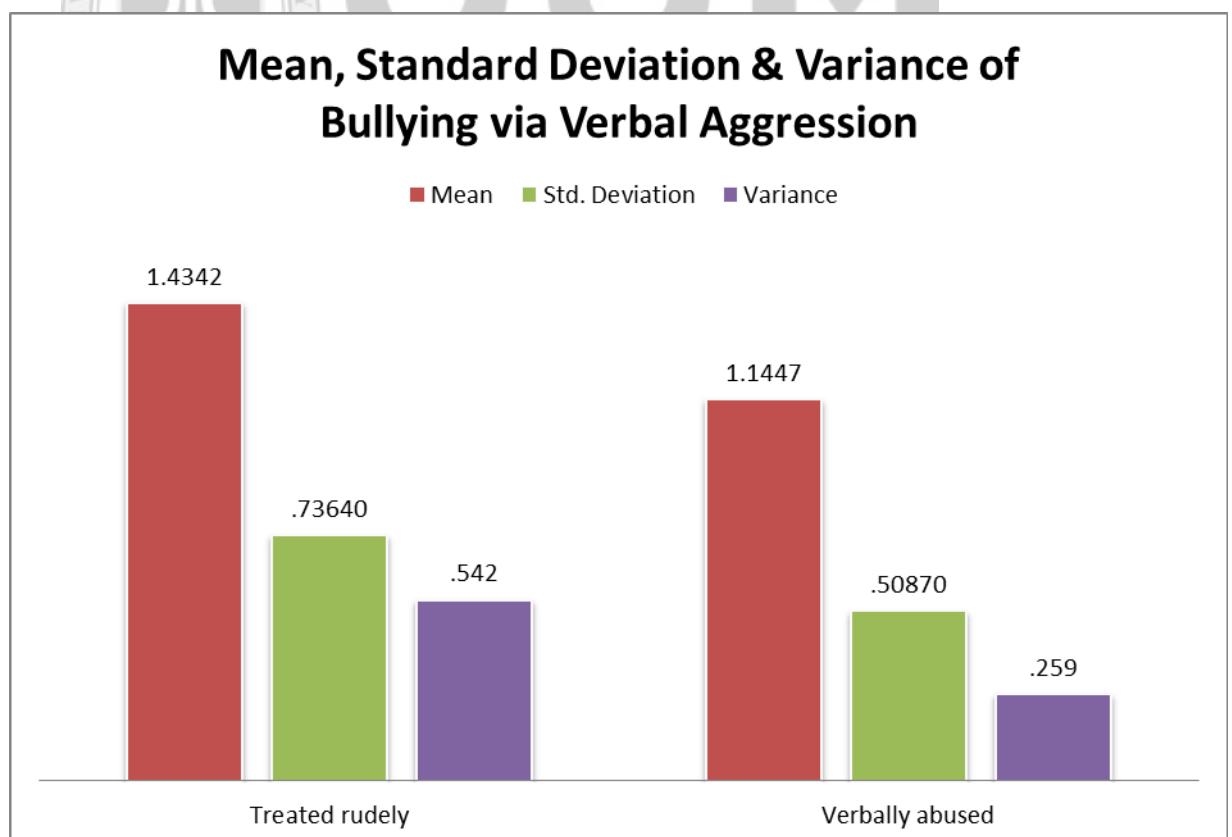


Figure 4.13  
*Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance of Bullying via Verbal Aggression*

#### **4.3.5 Bullying via Physical Aggression**

The fifth scale was physical aggression, such as being vulnerable / exposed to bodily harm, and insignificant use of violence. In this scale, it is happy to note that participants hardly experienced physical aggression, whether it is physical violence or feel jeopardized in terms of physical safety. 92.1% which makes up about 70 employees out of 76 never had the displeasure of dealing with physical violence while 90.8% had no qualms about feeling jeopardized or felt they were threatened with bodily harm. The mean values for both instances are quite close, physical violence was 1.0789 whilst feeling jeopardized was 1.1053. Only 7.1% claimed to be victims of physical violence while 7.9% did admit to feeling jeopardized at work.



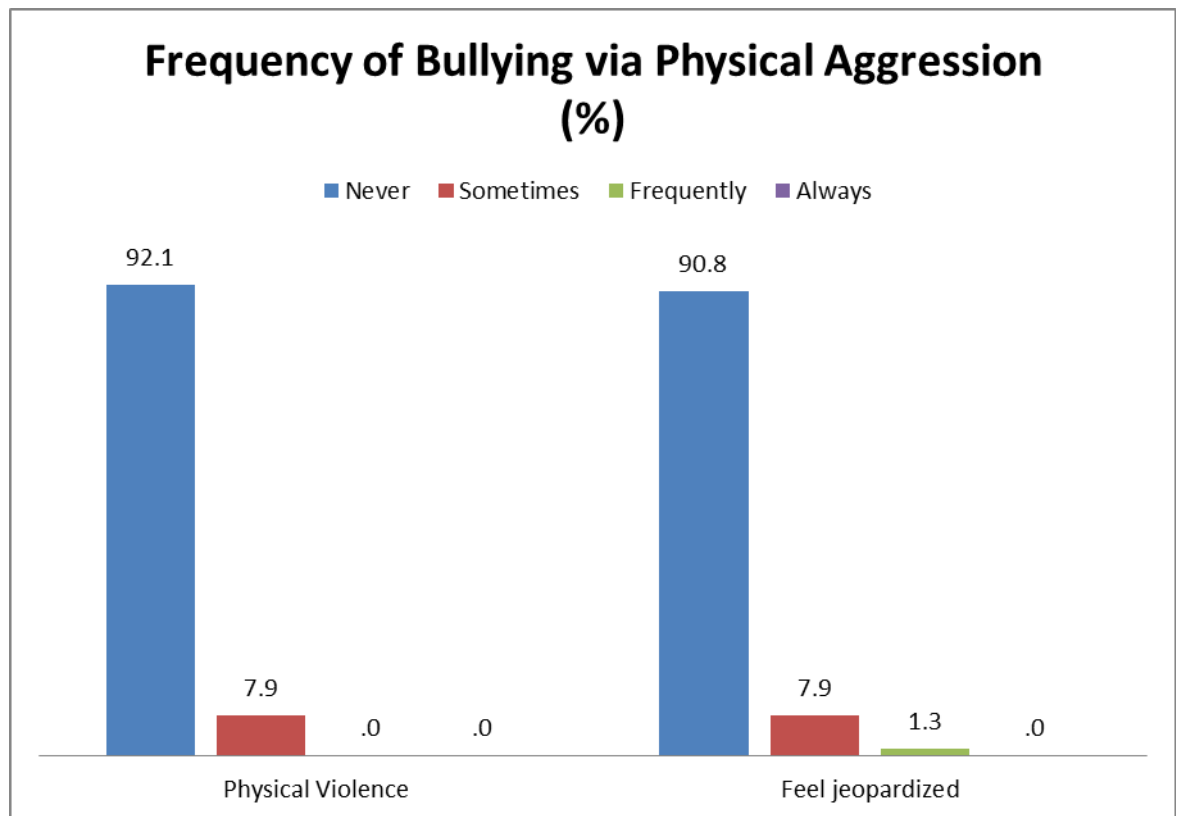


Figure 4.14  
*Frequency of Bullying via Physical Aggression*

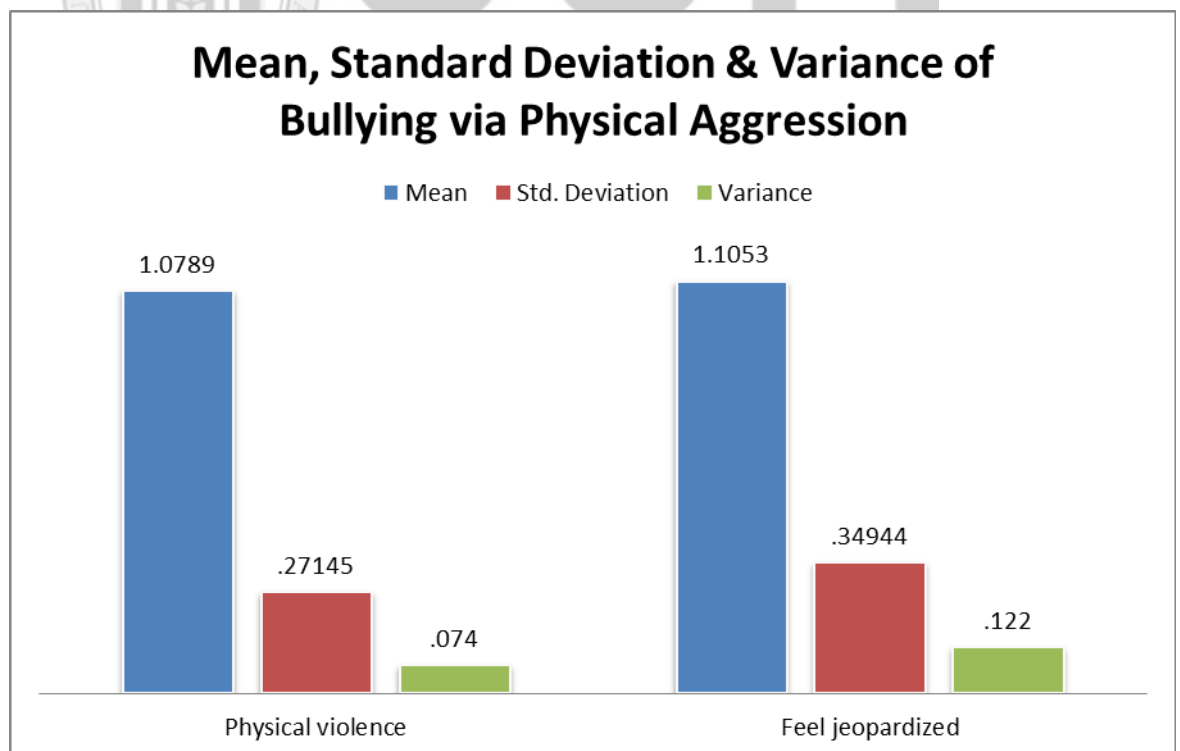


Figure 4.15  
*Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance of Bullying via Physical Aggression*

#### 4.3.6 Bullying via Spreading of Rumours

The sixth scale was gossiping and rumour mongering, which included spinning unpleasant tales about a person without their knowledge. This bullying behaviour was recorded as the third highest among the other acts, with 46.1% of employees claiming that they were sometimes the topic of office gossip. However a larger number of 51.3% were safe from such acts and had never experienced it. The mean value recorded was 1.5395. As for clearing ones name off baseless accusations, only 19.7% of employees admitted to sometimes experiencing it while the majority of the population, 77.6%, never had to go through the ordeal.

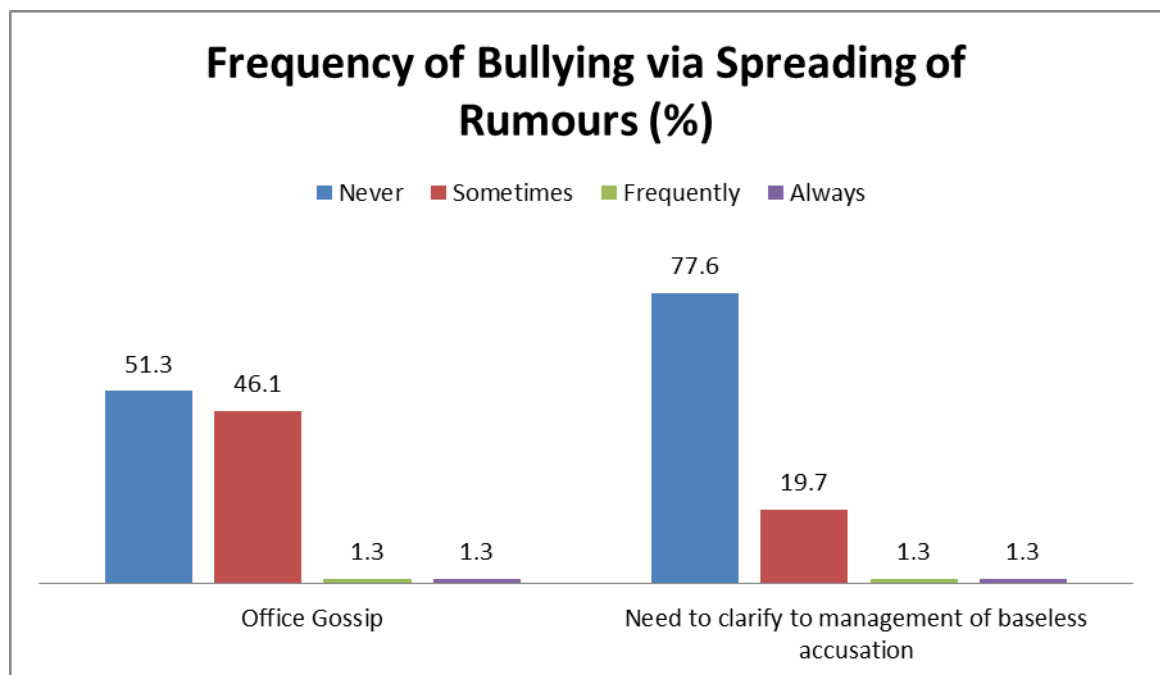


Figure 4.16  
*Frequency of Bullying via Spreading Rumours*

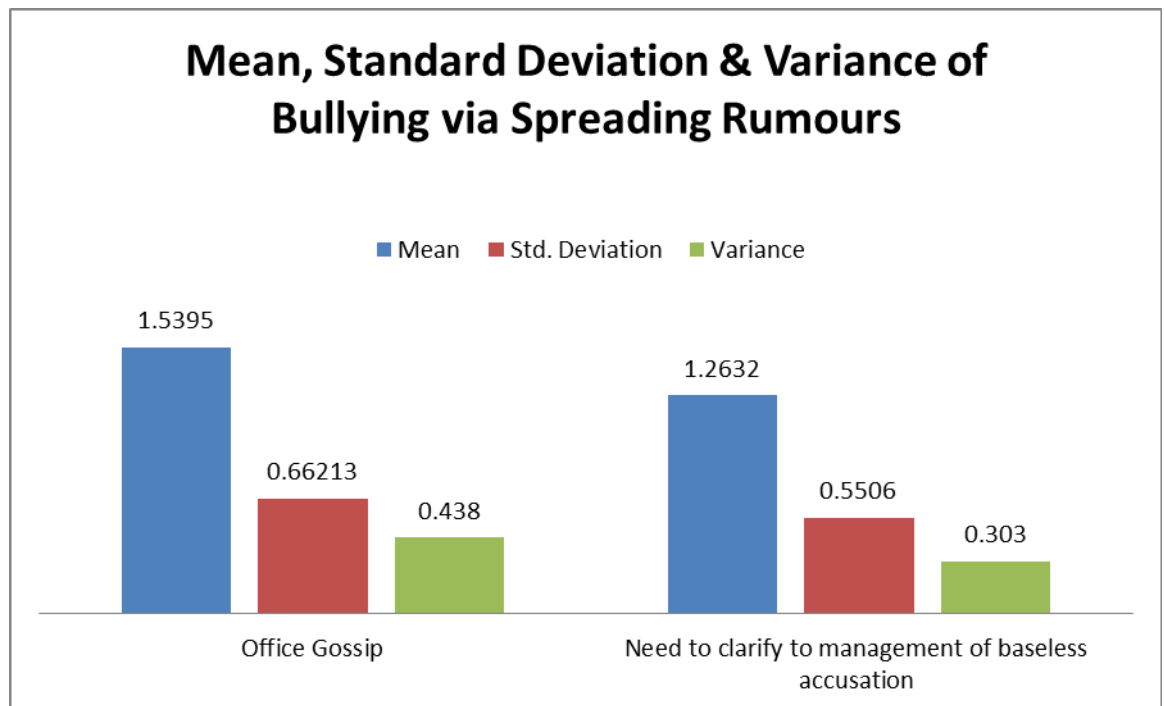


Figure 4.17

*Mean, Standard Deviation & Variance of Bullying via Spreading Rumours*



#### 4.4 Reliability Analysis

To analyse the reliability and ensure the performance of the instrument/questionnaire used in this research, the Cronbach Alpha test was used via SPSS. This analysis is typically used if a number of individual items on a questionnaire all measure the same construct and related to each other.

Table 4.2

*Reliability Analysis*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Number of Elements</b>	<b>Reliability Coefficient</b>
<i>Bullying via:</i>		
• Organisational Measures	7	0.804
• Attacking the Private Sphere	5	0.790
• Social Isolation	2	0.814
• Physical Abuse	2	0.806
• Verbal Abuse	2	0.835
• Spreading Rumours	2	0.786

Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability (SPSS FAQ, 2015). An Alpha coefficient within the range of 0.9 to 0.8 suggests that the items have relatively high internal consistency, whereas that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered "satisfactory" in most social science research situations. According to Table 4.2, it is safe to summarize that all six dependant variables which represents six different types of bullying have high reliability values.

#### 4.5 Statistical Hypothesis Testing

At the beginning of this research, several hypotheses were formed.

List of research hypothesis

- H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' gender
- H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' race
- H<sub>03</sub> There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' position at work
- H<sub>04</sub> There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees age
- H<sub>05</sub> There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' work experience

The method applied to assess all hypotheses stated above was by using the Pearson Correlation method. The Pearson Correlation method measures the association that exists between two variables on an interval scale. The results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3  
*Pearson Correlations Results*

		Gender	Race	Designation	Age	Employment
<b>WORKPLACE BULLY</b>	Pearson Correlation	.973	.191**	.829	.143**	.949
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.275	.023	.219	.037

From the table above, the correlation between workplace bullying and gender of target group, Pearson's  $r$  is 0.973; closer to 1, it is evident that the relationship between the two variables is strong. Furthermore, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.030, which is less than 0.05 which indicates it is statistically significant.

Onto the next variable, as opposed to gender, the analysis shows that race does not strongly correlate to workplace bullying, as the Pearson's  $r$  is 0.191, further from 1, with the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.275, more than 0.5, shows it is not statistically significant.

Yet another variable which does not seem to have strong correlation and statistical significance is age, where the Pearson's  $r$  is 0.143 and the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.219.

The remaining two variables, designation and duration of employment both show strong correlation with workplace bullying. The Pearson's  $r$  and the Sig. (2-tailed) value for both designation and duration of employment are 0.829 and 0.949; and 0.23 and 0.37 respectively.

Additionally, all correlations coefficients derived from the data are positive correlation, signifying that one variable increases in value, the second variable also increase in value.

From the findings above, the Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) analysis demonstrates that gender; designation and duration of employment of and employee have positive significant relationship and correlated with workplace bullying.



#### 4.6 Discussion of Research Findings

The following section will observe, discuss and scrutinize overall data and information that has been analysed and interpreted in chapter four. The question of significance in workplace bullying according to demographic factors is looked into to complement the main questions about the phenomenon of bullying in the banking sector.

To recapitulate, the most significant findings from the five hypothesis formed in the beginning of the study are shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4  
*Summary of Hypothesis Tests*

	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Results</b>
H <sub>01</sub>	There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' gender	Rejected
H <sub>02</sub>	There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' race	Accepted
H <sub>03</sub>	There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' position at work	Rejected
H <sub>04</sub>	There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees age	Accepted
H <sub>05</sub>	There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying in terms of RHB Bank employees' work experience	Rejected

#### **4.6.1 The Phenomenon of Bullying at Work in the Malaysian Banking Sector**

The phenomenon of workplace bullying in the banking sector as a whole shows that the incidence of bullying is at low level with the percentage of 66.9 % of the total respondents having no experience of being bullied. 28.9% of the total population of the study have occasionally been exposed to bullying whilst 2.8% on a more regular basis and just a handful of them, about 1.5% unlucky to be bullied almost all the time. Although the percentage of bank employees who are at the medium level is very small compared percentages in other levels, this indicates that bank employees are exposed to bullying in workplace. Based on a study by Rayner and Cooper (1997) noted that 53 % of respondents in their study among workers have been bullied at work.

Results from this study indicate that workplace bullying does occur among bank employees in the selected RHB Bank Berhad branches although the impact is not as staggering when compared to, say, hospital employees (Quine, L., 2001). It is safe to say that workplace bullying amongst bank staff is intermittent. A number of studies reported a higher frequency of of bullying in the public than the private sector, with some exemptions (Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996). Nevertheless, many incidences may have gone unreported as research suggests that workers from the public sector were more likely to report than the private sector (Hoel & Cooper, 2001; O'Connell & Williams, 2002; Zapf et al., 2003; O'Connell et al., 2007). However, such negative phenomenon should not be ignored because it would be an obstacle for the banking sector to achieve high performance and quality of services, and most importantly, have negative impacts on employees. This was discussed in a study by Woodrow, C., & Guest, D. E. (2014) that bullying does negatively affect staff's well-being and performance.

#### **4.6.2 Bullying via Attacking the Private Sphere**

Bullying via personal attack is the third highest occurrence experienced by bank staff with an overall mean value of 1.371. Among all acts listed in this scale, only about 3.9% of them, which carries a mean of 1.6184, felt that they were teased, harassed and made fun of excessively. Verdesca, A.T. et al (2011) discusses that this form of bullying, which targets personal traits or circumstances, which were common occurrences during their study of the Portuguese banking sector, aims to tear down and demotivate the victim and displays the coercive nature behind the power of bullying.

#### **4.6.3 Bullying via Social Isolation**

From the analysis, more employees feel that their opinions were sometimes ignored (73.7%); however most of them (80.3%) claimed never to have felt excluded from the group, perhaps during lunch or a team meeting. This shows that the mean value for opinions being ignored 2.0263, which is the highest recorded compared to all other bullying behaviour in the survey, while the mean for being excluded from the group only about half of that, which is 1.2237. Jóhannsdóttir and Ólafsson (2004) found in their study that social isolation is linked to passive submissive strategies for example as feeling powerless and 'waiting and hoping' it stops.

#### **4.6.4 Bullying via Organisational Measures**

Workplace bullying has been defined as an aggressive and dishonourable interaction methodically aimed towards a specific person (victim), who is cornered into a defenceless and exposed position by persistent actions by one or more individuals (bully) (Leymann, 1996). First-hand evidence has proven that the bullying is sparked by conflicts in responsibilities, inadequate work regulation, full workload, low

fulfilment with administration, poor social climate, struggles in the work division and organizational reformation or alterations of management (Verdasca, 2011). Among all act of bullying in terms of work, it is found in this study, most employees state that they are given unmanageable work load and unreasonable deadlines with the highest frequency with mean value of 1.82 compared to a mean value of other behaviours. Based on the study by Hoel & Cooper (1997), states that top management is usually given an enormous workload as well as task assignment with unreasonable deadlines.

The mean value is the highest compared to the rest in this group, with 1.8158. About 30.3% of the population claim to experience doing work beneath ones' station, while almost half, about 40.8%, of the population claim that they have occasionally experienced being watched or monitored, to the point of having no freedom or peace of mind while working. The third highest mean value recorded was for withholding information that could jeopardizes work, which is 1.4342. This findings highlight similarities with the study by Hoel and Cooper (2000) which states that the most commonly experienced negative behaviour at work was 'someone withholding information which affects your performance' (54.0% occasionally and 13.9% weekly or daily) followed by 'being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines' (49.3% and 7.8% respectively).

#### **4.6.5 Bullying via Verbal Aggression**

Verbal aggression was described as in Cameron's (1998) study an angry tone of voice was the most typical form of verbal abuse, then shrieking/screaming, threats directed at the organization, offensive remarks. Based on a study conducted by Helen Cox (1991), who is a nursing professor, gifted nursing students are being deterred to

join the field due to the verbal abuse in medical environments. In Sofield and Salmond's (2003) study, verbal abuse is normally accepted as work culture, and many are willing to put up with such behaviour. In this project paper however, according to the descriptive statistics, more employees experienced rude verbal treatment compared to direct verbal abuse. A larger majority of 69 employees, which makes up 90.8%, have been fortunate to have never experiences any onslaught of verbal abuse.

#### **4.6.6 Bullying Via Physical Violence**

Bullying via physical violence is experienced by a very small number of employees. Participants hardly experienced physical aggression, whether in form of punches and blows or feel jeopardized in terms of physical safety. 92.1% which makes up about 70 employees out of 76 never had the displeasure of dealing with physical violence while 90.8% had no qualms about feeling jeopardized or felt they were threatened with bodily harm. This aggressive form of bullying is quite rare and is on the extreme end of the spectrum and only arises in rare cases since normally, emotional and psychological violence are the tools used by workplace bullies (Georgakopoulos et al., 2011). Studies by Baron and Neuman (1996) and Geddes and Baron (1997) also suggest that at the workplace, verbal and passive forms of aggression were deemed as more recurrent compared to physical and active forms. Zapf, D. (2003) also conducted a review that examined several studies and found that bullying at the workplace of a physical nature were most rare as opposed to other acts of bullying.

#### **4.6.7 Bullying via Spreading of Rumours**

Spreading rumours was recorded as the third highest among the other acts, with 46.1% of employees claiming that they were sometimes the topic of office gossip and had nasty things spoken about them behind their backs. As for clearing ones name off baseless accusations, only 19.7% of employees admitted to sometimes experiencing it while the majority of the population, 77.6%, never had to go through the ordeal.

Gossiping and spreading rumours are considered a passive and indirect form of bullying (Yildirim & Yildirim, 2007).

Bordia et al. found that employees reporting negative rumours also reported experiencing more work-related stress. In a study conducted by Vartia and Hyyti (2002) discover that spreading of rumours, gossiping and not appreciating employees' efforts and contribution to the job or the job itself. Victims of bullying may assume that his co-workers and the others in association talk behind his back, isolate the victim from working environment and it causes that the victim to build a wall around him, as a form of escapism, causing emotional disorders in the future (Akyüz et al., 2013).

## **4.7 Significance of Demographic Variables on Workplace Bullying**

### **4.7.1 Significance of Gender on Workplace Bullying**

Based on the correlation analysis, gender of the target group had a significant relationship with the occurrence of bullying, with a Pearson's Correlation value of .973. The overall percentage of men bullied at the workplace is higher compared to women where the mean for men was 1.49 while the mean for women is 1.38. Based on studies by Einarsen & Skogstad (1996), Leymann (1992); and Vartia (1996) state that there the difference between gender and bullying in the workplace where victims ratio between male and female are the same. Based on each type of bullying, the mean values for women appear to be lower than the mean value of the men except spreading of rumours where the mean value for women reached 1.56 whereas for the men it was 1.41. These results seem to correspond with the findings by Mackensen von Astfeld (2010) who found that women used significantly more strategies affecting communication, social relationships, and social reputation whereas men preferred strategies affecting the victims work. Trijueque and Gomez (2010) also uncovered similar findings that a significantly higher percentage of women experience workplace bullying.

### **4.7.2 Significance of Race on Workplace Bullying**

In this study the Pearson's coefficient derived from the analysis showed that there was no correlation between race and the occurrence of workplace bullying. Hoel and Cooper (2000) reported that respondents in their study from an Asian ethnic background were more likely to be bullied than those from a White background and that they recounted high frequencies of 'insults or offensive remarks', however most were gone unreported.

#### **4.7.3 Significance of Job Designation on Workplace Bullying**

Salin (2008) observed that bullying is not constrained to tyrannical types of leadership behaviours; and that it can also become apparent between co-workers at the same hierarchical level or even upwards, for example when subordinates bully a manager.

According to the findings, the Pearson's  $r$  and the Sig. (2-tailed) value for designation of employment was 0.829 and 0.23 respectively. Hence, there exists a significant difference between the bank employees' grade factors with bullying in the workplace.

The present findings seem to be consistent with other research which found that employees from a wide spectrum of profession, the unskilled workers may have experienced bullying at work the most compared to the rest (Agervold, M., 2007). Notelaers, G. (2011) also confirmed that workplace bullying is present according to occupational status. However, these results differ from Hoel et al. (2000) who found that the difference in the number of victims of bullying between workers, supervisors and middle and senior management is insignificant and almost similar. Salin (2001) however claimed that there were less bullying amongst higher levels of the organisation. Yıldırım, H., & Uysaloglu, B. (2012) associated workplace bullying with hierarchical status, with employees on lower hierarchical levels reporting more bullying than higher level employees.

#### **4.7.4 Significance of Age on Workplace Bullying**

With the Pearson's  $r$  of 0.143 and the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.219, it is clear that age does not have a significant relationship with workplace bullying.



The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Hoel, H., & Cooper, C. L. (2000) who claims that age seems to be of little importance with regard to the prevalence of bullying. This is further stressed by Quine, L. (2001) whose study on nurses exposed to bullying stated that there were no differences by age or gender in reports of bullying.

#### **4.7.5 Significance of Duration of Employment on Workplace Bullying**

It is a common assumption that newcomers or new employees are bullied by senior workers or those with more experience, regardless of their post. McKenna et al. (2003) found that 34% of nurses in their first year after registration experienced verbal conflict, including statements that were rude, abusive, humiliating or unjust criticism. Duration of employment shows a strong correlation with workplace bullying, as Pearson's  $r$  and the Sig. (2-tailed) value are 0.949 and 0.37 respectively. Hence it follows that there exists a significant relationship between the bank employees work experience with bullying in the workplace. Quine, L. (2001) reported that nurses who worked full time were more likely to be bullied than those who worked part time, indicating that those who have been in the industry longer were more susceptible to bullying.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, some conclusions and suppositions will be made based on the results of the study on workplace bullying among bank employees at RHB Bank Berhad. In addition to the discussion of the implications, recommendations generated from the results obtained are also included.

The main focus of this study was to determine the background of the phenomenon of bullying in the banking sector and to determine if there exists any significant relationship based on demographic factors of RHB Bank employees with workplace bullying.

Bullying in the workplace occurs among bank employees in Malaysia albeit it is at a low frequency. Most respondents experienced bullying via organisational measures, followed by being socially isolated and the third highest bullying behaviour being involved in spreading of rumours. Among respondents in this study, physical aggression was recorded as the least frequent occurrence with the lowest number of respondents who have experienced it.

Bullying behaviour where views and insights from other employees were ignored was frequently experienced by respondents followed by impossible date of submission of an unreasonable task. Physical violence in the workplace is the least frequent behaviour experienced by RHB staff in Malaysia.

From the Pearson's Correlation analysis carried out, there is a significant relationship between particular demographic factors of RHB bank staff in Malaysia with bullying at the workplace.

Based on the findings, it can be summed that there is a significant relationship between the genders of respondents with whether they experienced workplace violence. As for work position, there is a difference between the support staff and the higher management level when it comes to bullying. There is also significance in bullying in terms of how long staffs were employed.

In summary it can be stated that there are notable significance in workplace bullying based on sex, occupational status and duration of employment among RHB bank employees Malaysia. Meanwhile there were no significant relationship among bank employees according to age and race. The result of this study shows that bullying occurs among RHB bank employees and most employees' state that they experience bullying in the form of unmanageable work load, followed by social isolation and being victim of rumours.

## **5.2 Implications of Workplace Bullying**

Based on an interview with psychologist Dr. Anne Ng, Utusan Malaysia reported on February 16, 2010 that employees who are victims of bullying will also face the symptoms and illnesses such as anxiety, weight gain, headaches, back pain, nausea, mouth ulcers, insomnia, nightmares, rash, diarrhoea, high blood pressure, depression and low self-esteem. Victims of bullying actions cause no fun to go to work and various methods will be used to avoid going to the office. Employees will often be ill

or sick leave so as not to get into the office and this will lead to decreased employee productivity.

Various adverse effects of bullying, directly or indirectly, can be observed. Bullying will also cause a decrease in job satisfaction (Einarsen & Mc.Gregor 1997) and the health of the victims of bullying (Einarsen , Matthiesen , & Skogstad , 1998) .

According to Leymann (1996) and Rayner (1997), among the effects of bullying on the organization were the increasing number of workers who were absent from work, increasing number of employees who want to quit or leave the organization, an increase in the replacement workers ( turnover ) and number of employees who quit early .

### **5.3 Suggestions and Implications of the Study**

Results of this study are expected to provide useful information on the demography of bank employees and its role with bullying in the workplace. It is useful in giving a glimpse of what bank employees experience and which demographic factor has a strong significant link with being bullied at work. Workplace bullying is akin to a disease in the workplace; and, if measures are not taken to cure it, both the organization and individual employees will become increasingly unhealthy (Glendinning, 2001). There is evidence supporting the occurrence of the physiological and psychological effects of bullying and how they affect wellness, attentiveness, and absenteeism in the workplace. The effect of workplace bullying on job satisfaction, job performance and other employee attitudes and work have also been observed and studied.

Outcomes have been well documented as a preparatory step in the hope of educating or creating awareness among employees in general about bullying at the workplace because we are of the assumption that this phenomenon is rampant especially in schools. By identifying the significance of the demographic variables on workplace bullying, it may shed light on which groups have potentially high risk of being bullied (Moreno-Jimenez et al., 2008) and subsequently this information will aid in forming preventative measures (Yıldırım, H., & Uysaloglu, B., 2012). Furthermore, these mitigating measures, customized in accordance to the particular characteristics and specifications of vulnerable groups, may significantly contribute to defining the preventive measures against mobbing.

Similar to bullying at school, a guidelines should be established it for the private or public sector on how to prevent bullying in the workplace since it continues unabated; because there is no organization that is free from any form of workplace bullying (Hoel & Cooper, 2001). The government should encourage the introduction of policies that are effective, safe and fair of bullying in the workplace. Protection of victims when reporting to the safe reporting procedures must be considered. This would encourage victims to come forward through protection provided by the policy as well as reporting procedures that are formidable, widespread and fully supported. Explanations of organizational policies related to bullying need to be explained over and over each time in order to maintain a high level of awareness among the staff of the organization, as anti-bullying should be a practice and not just a campaign.

As Malaysia moves closer towards her aim as a developed country by 2020, the quality of banking and finance sector must be at par with the quality and the quality of other developed countries. Therefore, in achieving the target level required, bank

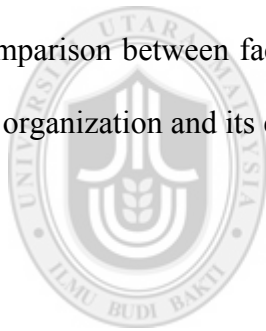
employees must strengthened and improve in all aspects of their performance. This study could explain more about the phenomenon of bullying in the workplace because it will cause disruption to the organization and the individual to meet the demands of service as expected by customers of bank staff 'front liners ' for the banking sector . A highly motivated and content employee can effectively lessen the operational cost without compromising the quality of service and profitability. If the exceptional quality of service is shown by bank employees then the customer will assume the entire a general opinion that the government structure as a whole is formidable.

Based on previous studies, there were cases where an individual was exposed repeatedly to bullying will eventually result in demoralisation, performance, and poor general health. In a situation where a victim of bullying at the workplace who have to deal with the discrimination and as well as feeling burnout and stress, they would surely feel demotivated and undergo psychological problems to boot.

As emphasized by Yusof (2001) on the importance of creating and maintaining a working environment that is fair to its employees; it would help earn and secure an employees' trust and in turn, obtain their complete cooperation and motivate them to work for the betterment of the organization. A content worker would be more productive, and ultimately raise the service delivery standard of their bank.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Researches**

This study was performed to determine the act of bullying in the banking sector and its significance based on demographic factors. A more in depth study with longer period which includes more structural variables on workplace bullying at banks is called for as this study merely scratches the surface to explore more aspects of the workplace bullying phenomenon and to identify causes and effects of its occurrences. The level of damages experienced by organizations and individuals due to this phenomenon whether in the public or private sectors should also be looked into. The question of the relationship between job performance, bullying, burnout, stresses and any factor that impedes an organization to achieve its vision or cause performance degradation and quality of work must be taken into account. Comparison between factors will help organizations formulate action plan that suits the organization and its employees.

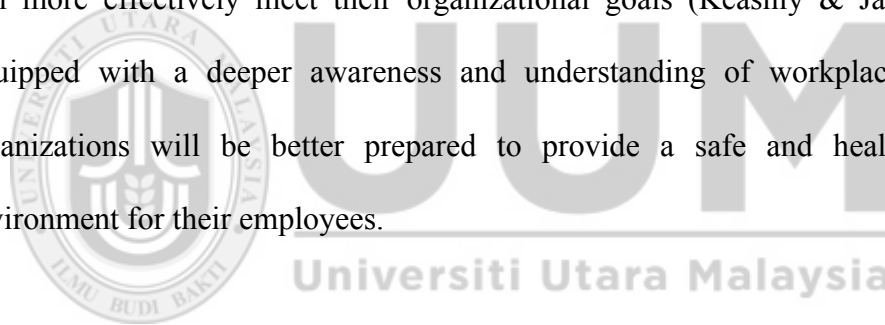


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## **5.5 Conclusion**

In a nutshell, based on the analysis of the questionnaires, it was shown that there exists a significant relationship between gender, job designation and duration of employment with workplace bullying. Race and age, however, did not seem to have a significant relationship with workplace bullying.

Early identification of bullying among bank employees in Malaysia is important. This is because bullying may interfere with job performance and create an unpleasant working environment (McKay, R., et al., 2008) and it is especially imperative to sustain a calm atmosphere at financial institutions, where employees are laden with high accountability. Organizational leaders who proactively address this social issue will more effectively meet their organizational goals (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003). Equipped with a deeper awareness and understanding of workplace bullying, organizations will be better prepared to provide a safe and healthy working environment for their employees.





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