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## COGNITIVE APPRAISAL OF NEGATIVE ACTS

### **Bullying at Work: Cognitive Appraisal of Negative Acts, Coping, Wellbeing and Performance**

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### **Abstract**

The negative outcomes of experiencing workplace bullying are well documented, but a strong theoretical explanation for this has been relatively neglected. We draw on cognitive appraisal theory to suggest that individuals' appraisals of and responses to negative acts at work will moderate the impact of said acts on wellbeing and performance outcomes. In a large study (N = 3217) in Southeast Asia, we examine moderators in the form of 1) the extent to which individuals identify themselves as being bullied and 2) the coping strategies that individuals employ to deal with negative acts. We find that these factors do moderate the impact of experiencing negative acts, in particular work-related negative acts. When individuals are subject to work-related negative acts but do not see themselves as being bullied they report higher levels of performance than those who do identify themselves as being bullied. Problem-focused coping was found to be effective for those sometimes targeted, but for persistent targets was detrimental to wellbeing. The present research has important implications for bullying research in examining factors which contribute to outcomes of bullying.

**Keywords:** Bullying, Cognitive Appraisal Theory, Coping

### **Bullying at Work: Cognitive Appraisal of Negative Acts, Coping, Wellbeing and Performance**

Much research has been carried out over the past 20 years or so about the outcomes of workplace bullying (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Samnani & Singh, 2012). We know, for example, that victims of bullying report outcomes such as higher levels of burnout, physical symptoms of stress, and turnover intention, and lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). It is also apparent that there is some variability in how individuals respond to being bullied at work (e.g. Cortina & Magley, 2009; Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2008). However, the theoretical explanation for this has been relatively neglected (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Parzefall & Salin, 2010) and we know little about the factors which moderate the impact of being bullied on individual or organizational outcomes (Samnani, Singh, & Ezzedeen, 2013). In the present study, we draw on cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to suggest that the impact of being a target of bullying on performance and wellbeing outcomes is moderated by individuals' appraisal of (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986) and coping responses to (Folkman, 1984) the bullying.

Workplace bullying research broadly identifies victims of bullying in one of two ways; either through self-labeling where individuals identify themselves as being bullied (Rayner, 1997) or through behavioral measures based on individual's experiences of negative acts in terms of frequency and over time (Nielsen, Notelaers, & Einarsen, 2011). Both methods have different strengths and weaknesses (Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2010), and the debate in the literature has generally been concerned with which of these truly identifies bullying (Liefoghe & Mackenzie Davey, 2001). However, we know little about how the two interact (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). In other words, does the extent to which individuals identify themselves as being bullied moderate the impact of negative acts on

outcomes? Cognitive appraisal theory would suggest that individuals' responses to an encounter are influenced by their primary appraisal about whether or not it is a threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As such, we suggest that, with respect to bullying, this primary appraisal can be conceptualized as the extent to which the target explicitly identifies themselves as being bullied.

When targeted with bullying behaviors individuals can adopt a number of strategies in an attempt to minimize the negative outcomes of the experience (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Drawing on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) distinction between active, or problem-focused, and passive, or emotion-focused, coping we examine the extent to which these different approaches moderate the impact of being bullied on outcomes. Research has suggested that the magnitude of the bullying experienced does not impact on the coping strategies employed (Hogh & Dofradottir, 2001) although coping can be seen as a process which evolves as bullying persists (Glasl, 1982) and there is a possibility that some coping strategies might be more successful than others (Dehue, Bolman, Völlink, & Pouwelse, 2012).

The present research therefore makes important contributions to our knowledge of bullying and wellbeing at work. Firstly, by developing a strong theoretical explanation for how individuals can effectively respond to negative workplace acts. Secondly, in suggesting that both negative acts and self-labeled bullying are important, this paper has implications for future bullying research.

### **Workplace bullying and outcomes**

Workplace bullying is predominantly defined through four criteria (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). It is firstly the experience of negative acts which may be work-related (e.g. withholding work) or personal (e.g. gossiping about someone) in nature (Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994). These negative acts must, secondly, be experienced repeatedly, rather than as a one-

off (Leymann, 1996) and, thirdly, they must happen over a period of time and therefore be not only repeated but persistent (Zapf & Gross, 2001). As to how repeated and prevalent the acts must be in order to constitute bullying, Leymann (1996) has suggested that the acts must be experienced at least weekly, for 6 months or more. Although, Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001) adopt a more conservative definition of two negative acts per week over the same period. The final criterion is that there must be a power distinction between the perpetrator of the negative acts and the target (Agervold, 2007; Salin, 2003; Saunders, Huynh, & Goodman-Delahunty, 2007) which makes the acts difficult for the recipient to defend against (Einarsen et al., 1994). It is important to note that this definition also precludes negative acts which are linked to gender or sexual conflict, which are seen as distinct experiences (Einarsen et al., 1994).

Intertwined with the discussion over how bullying can be defined is the question about how bullying should be measured in quantitative studies. Broadly, there are two approaches to measuring the experience of being bullied (Nielsen et al., 2011); the self-labeling method and the behavioral experience method. The self-labeling method asks respondents whether or not they have been bullied within the last 6 months. This is normally, and most effectively (Nielsen et al., 2010), accompanied by a definition of bullying. The benefit of the self-labeling approach is that it is easier to administer, often involving only one or two question items. It also taps directly into individuals' subjective perceptions about whether or not they have been bullied, which are likely to be important in defining the affective response to the bullying behavior (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). While this subjective perception provides insight into the experience of workplace bullying, it is likely that some people who do not label themselves as being bullied, yet experience the same negative behaviors, are not identified. This means that prevalence rates of exposure to bullying behaviors may be conservative (Nielsen et al., 2010).

The second approach focuses instead on the exposure to bullying behaviors and presents respondents with a list of negative behaviors without making specific reference to bullying (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). One of the most common behavioral measures is the Negative Acts Questionnaire – Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009) which includes work-related, personal and physical intimidation acts. Some may seem relatively trivial if experienced only once, but over time would constitute bullying (Leymann, 1996). This can be seen as an example of a causal approach to measurement (Spector & Jex, 1998), in that each item captures a distinct but interrelated experience. The causal approach implies that someone may experience one of the negative acts, without necessarily experiencing another. The behavioral experience method deals with the criticism that self-labeling provides no information about the type of bullying and also reduces the risk of priming that is inherent in self-report measures (Nielsen et al., 2011). This method, however, brings additional complications about the way in which the individual negative acts are analyzed. Cut-offs have been suggested based on the Leymann (1996) definition that negative acts should be experienced at least weekly for six months or more (Notelaers & Einarsen, 2013). However, using the cut-off approach to analyzing the NAQ-R implies that bullying is an either/or experience (Einarsen et al., 2009). In addition, it examines only whether or not someone is bullied, not the nature of the bullying experienced (Notelaers, Einarsen, De Witte, & Vermunt, 2006). More recently, several studies (e.g. Leon-Perez, Notelaers, Arenas, Munduate, & Medina, 2013; Notelaers et al., 2006) have adopted a latent class cluster approach (Vermunt & Magidson, 2002), which identifies clusters of responses to the NAQ-R according to the level and nature of the negative acts reported. We adopt this approach as it overcomes the criticisms of the other approaches and has been found to have improved reliability and predictability over other methods (Notelaers et al., 2006).

Numerous studies have found links between experiencing bullying behavior and negative wellbeing and performance outcomes. In their meta-analysis of 90 studies, Bowling and Beehr (2006) found that experiencing workplace bullying explained unique variance in burnout, physical symptoms of stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention. This was the case even after controlling for role ambiguity and role conflict, which are other common workplace stressors. Victims of bullying have also been found to report lower organizational citizenship behaviors and higher counter-productive work behaviors (Devonish, 2013) and longer term psychiatric distress and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004). Considering the impact of the magnitude of bullying experienced, those classified as experiencing severe or pervasive bullying reported higher levels of psychological strain (Leon-Perez et al., 2013), lower levels of pleasure and higher worrying at work, and poorer sleep quality (Notelaers et al., 2006) than those who experienced negative acts only sometimes or rarely, indicating that magnitude is an important consideration. On the basis of these findings, and on the assumption that our latent class cluster analysis will reveal a similar pattern as these previous studies, we make the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: Individuals more frequently bullied experience more negative performance and wellbeing outcomes.*

### **Self-labeling as an appraisal mechanism**

Although research has consistently supported a negative relationship between being the target of bullying and wellbeing and performance outcomes, very little research has examined the mechanisms which moderate this relationship (Samnani et al., 2013). As outlined above, cognitive appraisal theory proposes that an individual's interpretation of an event shapes their personal and emotional response to it (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). One primary appraisal that individuals make is the extent to which the event is a threat to their wellbeing (Bunk &

Magley, 2013). If it is not a threat, then no action is required to mitigate it. However, if it is deemed to be a potential threat, the secondary appraisal is then to assess how to cope with it (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). With respect to primary appraisal, Magley and colleagues (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Cortina & Magley, 2009) suggest that individuals' responses to negative experience in the workplace will be defined by a complex set of emotions and appraisals. These authors focus on emotional appraisal as a response to workplace incivility and find that emotional responses do explain differential responses to incivility. As well as their affective response, individuals' attribution of the negative acts is also important (Catterson & Hunter, 2010). We suggest that an important indicator of this attribution is whether or not the individual self-labels themselves as being bullied.

It has been argued that the differences in results reported in some bullying studies is a product of the instrument used to measure bullying (Nielsen et al., 2010; Notelaers et al., 2006). In other words, the behavioral and self-labeling methods are measuring different things. As suggested by Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, and DeNardo (1999), identifying oneself as a victim of bullying is likely to result in more negative outcomes than not identifying with this label, even if the target of the same negative acts. In particular, the identity of being a victim may imply stigmatization and have negative connotations such as perceived weakness (Agervold, 2007; Lewis, 2004). In support of this, Hershcovis and Barling (2010) found that victims of workplace aggression personalized their mistreatment and therefore experienced negative health outcomes. Likewise, Ireland (1999) found that prison inmates who attributed hostile reasons to negative acts experienced higher levels of conflict escalation. As such, we would argue, based on cognitive appraisal theory, that self-labeling can be seen as an indicator of a threat appraisal when experiencing negative acts and therefore labeling oneself as being bullied is likely to moderate the impact of experiencing negative acts, which are more objectively defined (Magley et al., 1999).

The importance of the attributions that individuals make about negative acts that they experience is particularly important when the possible interpretation of the act is ambiguous (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). In particular, research would suggest that there is some ambiguity about whether experiencing work-related negative acts (e.g. excessive workload) are perceived to be bullying, or not (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Nielsen et al., 2011). For example, a target of “repeated criticism with respect to your work and effort” might perceive this to be an aspect of performance management (Samnani et al., 2013) and as such might increase their performance in order to avoid these criticisms, but only if they do not perceive the behavior to be bullying (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). In these circumstances, therefore, some work-related negative acts may actually result in higher performance when individuals do not perceive the act to constitute bullying (Samnani et al., 2013).

The interaction between behavioral and subjective reports of being bullied has not been examined before, that we are aware of. For example, Leon-Perez *et al* (2013) included both a self-label measure and the NAQ in their latent class cluster analysis, but did not examine the interaction between the two. Likewise, research into victimization has conceptualized the appraisal of threat as a mediator between being victimized and emotional responses, although with little empirical support (Anderson & Hunter, 2012; Catterson & Hunter, 2010). As this is conceptualized as a mediation it fails to consider the impact on individuals who have the same negative experience but do not appraise it as a threat. Based on the theory set out above, we make two hypotheses about the moderating effect of self-labeling. The first relates to wellbeing outcomes, for which we expect that self-labeling will predict negative outcomes regardless of the type or frequency of negative acts experienced. We suggest the same for performance outcomes, except when considering work-related negative acts. Rather, we

believe that work-related negative acts could positively predict performance if not perceived to be bullying:

*Hypothesis 2: The relationship between being targeted with negative acts and wellbeing outcomes is moderated by self-labeling such that those who self-label as being bullied will report the lowest levels of wellbeing, regardless of the frequency of acts reported.*

*Hypothesis 3: The relationship between being targeted with negative acts and performance outcomes is moderated by self-labeling such that a) those who self-label as being bullied will report the lowest levels of performance, regardless of the frequency of acts reported, with the exception of b) those targeted with work-related negative acts who will report lower levels of performance if they self-label, and higher levels of performance if they do not.*

### **The effectiveness of coping strategies**

Coping derives from the stress literature and can be seen as “the cognitive and behavioral efforts to master, reduce, or tolerate the internal and/or external demands that are created by the stressful transaction” (Folkman, 1984, p. 843). In social psychology, these efforts are most commonly seen as situational, triggered by demands, and it is recognized that individuals respond to these demands in different ways (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). We follow Folkman and Lazarus (1980), who identify two functions of coping; problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping involves trying to take steps to reduce the stressor by finding a solution to the problem and, as such, can be seen as an active approach to coping (Richman, Rospenda, Flaherty & Freels, 2001). Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, can be seen as passive (Dewe & Cooper, 2007). For example, trying to

ignore the problem (known as 'selective coping') or manage ones affective state in order to reduce the negative impact of the stressor (referred to as 'resigned coping').

As to the effectiveness of different coping strategies from the perspective of wellbeing and performance, Dewe and colleagues (2010) have suggested that there are inconsistencies in research approach and findings meaning that the picture is not clear. It is generally suggested that more active, problem-focused strategies are more effective than passive strategies for guarding against negative outcomes (e.g. Dehue et al., 2012). This is on the basis that more active strategies attempt to remove or control the stressor, whereas passive or emotion-focused strategies aim to modify individuals' emotional responses to the stressor, rather than addressing the source (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Empirical research has supported this, particularly with regard to health and wellbeing outcomes, which have been found to be improved with more active strategies (e.g. Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, et al., 1986; Lechner, Bolman, & van Dalen, 2007). Although there is also counter evidence that active coping is often unsuccessful, leading to heightened feelings of stress (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Richman et al., 2001), hostile reactions from the target which can have adverse effects on wellbeing (Glasl, 1982; Lee & Brotheridge, 2006; Zapf & Gross, 2001), and negative alcohol-related behaviors (Richman et al., 2001).

Previous studies influenced by cognitive appraisal theory (e.g. Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, et al., 1986; Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, et al., 1986) have examined coping as a mediator between stressors and outcomes. The challenge with this approach is that it would assume that the magnitude of negative acts experienced would predict different coping strategies. This assumption was tested in several studies which found that the magnitude of bullying did not predict the type of coping strategy employed (Dehue et al., 2012; Høgh & Dofradottir, 2001; Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004). Even if severity does predict coping, empirical evidence would suggest that choice in coping strategy is also influenced by

multiple situational and dispositional factors (for reviews see; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Dewe & Cooper, 2007; Dewe, O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2010; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). In line with this, we would suggest that it is the interaction between the severity or type of bullying (i.e. the latent class clusters) and the coping strategy employed that will define the effectiveness with respect to these outcomes (Cox, Johnson, & Coyle, 2015; Samnani et al., 2013). This proposal recognizes the fact that the choice of coping strategy employed can vary from individual to individual, regardless of the severity (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004), and would explain some of the mixed findings with respect to the effectiveness of coping because these strategies work in some situations, but not others (Dewe et al., 2010).

Prior research has only occasionally examined coping as a moderator between bullying-related stressors and individual outcomes and, as such, there is limited theory upon which to base predictions about how different types or magnitude of bullying might interact with different coping strategies. In general, as argued by Leymann and Gustafsson (1996), when stressors are severe, attempts to cope might result in negative outcomes because these attempts lead to resource depletion. Likewise, although problem-focused coping is generally believed to be more effective for reducing the negative outcomes of stressors (e.g. Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, et al., 1986) this approach has been found to be more effective when individuals feel that the situation can be changed, perhaps when it is less severe (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As such, it is possible that problem-focused coping for more severe bullying might be unsuccessful, which would predict negative outcomes, as discussed above (e.g. Fitzgerald et al., 1995). In more general terms, Dehue et al., (2012) have followed the reasoning that active coping is more effective than passive in reducing the negative outcomes of bullying because it attempts to solve the problem. These authors found that targets who used passive coping strategies reported higher levels of health-related problems, and active coping strategies had no impact. This indicates, therefore, that neither approach to coping is

effective although active coping is not perhaps as resource depleting. It is important to note, though, that these authors adopt a simplistic either/or definition of bullying, so we do not know about the impact of severity or type of bullying experienced. Most recently, Cox and colleagues (2015) examined coping as a moderator to the impact of experiencing community violence. They found that social coping (e.g. seeking out others for advice) positively moderated the relationship with turnover intention, solitary coping (e.g. distracting oneself with work) was ineffective for job performance, and victims of violence adopting maladaptive coping (e.g. substance use, disengaging) reported higher levels of psychological strain. Although the study adopts a different conceptualization of coping, it is evident that different coping strategies might be effective in different situations, or with respect to different outcomes.

As there is no consistent theoretical proposition or empirical findings with regards to the interaction between types of coping and the severity or type of bullying we do not make specific predictions about interactions between these factors but rather state hypotheses based on the previous research which suggests that problem-focused coping strategies are more effective than passive strategies:

*Hypothesis 4: Coping moderates the relationship between being targeted by bullying and performance and wellbeing outcomes such that a) bullied individuals adopting problem-focused coping experience less negative outcomes than those who don't and; b) bullied individuals adopting selective or resigned coping experience more negative outcomes than those who don't*

The theoretical model and hypotheses are depicted in figure 1.

## **Methods**

### **Participants and procedure**

Data reported here is compiled from four cross-sectional studies in Southeast Asia (total  $N = 3,217$ ); Vietnam ( $N = 1,044$ ), Cambodia ( $N = 821$ ), Thailand ( $N = 800$ ), and Philippines ( $N = 552$ ) carried out between May 2012 and March 2013. Respondents were recruited by approaching organizations in key industry sectors; education, healthcare, manufacturing, and hospitality, in each of the four countries. Respondents were not pre-selected as to whether or not they had experienced bullying, thereby reducing the potential bias found in more selective samples (Nielsen et al., 2010). Self-reports were collected through questionnaires administered by trained researchers in each country. Translations in Thai, Khmer (Cambodia) and Vietnamese, were carried out by professional, bilingual translators. In Philippines questionnaires were administered in English. Workers were from four sectors; Manufacturing ( $N = 906$ , 28%), Education ( $N = 836$ , 26%), Hospitality ( $N = 798$ , 25%) and Healthcare ( $N = 676$ , 21%). The mean age was 31.6 years ( $SD = 9.59$ ) with a range of 18 to 70, mean organizational tenure was 5 years ( $SD = 6.12$ ) and 46.5% of the sample were female.

## Measures

**Self-labeled bullied.** A single item measured respondents' beliefs about whether or not they were bullied; 'do you consider yourself to have been bullied at your workplace over the past 6 months'. The question was scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Scale labels were; 'no' (1), 'yes, but only rarely' (2), 'yes, now and then' (3), 'yes, several times a week' (4) and 'yes, almost daily' (5). This question was asked after the negative acts questionnaire, to avoid the potential for priming identified by Nielsen and colleagues (2011). In line with Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) a definition of bullying was provided. This definition of workplace bullying is adapted from Olweus and his bullying at school research (Olweus, 1978, 1993), and has been adapted for the workplace as follows (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003, p. 15):

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

**Negative acts.** The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009) comprises 22 items describing different negative acts. Items include work-related acts (e.g. "being ordered to do work below your level of competence"), personal acts (e.g. "being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm") and intimidation or aggressive acts (e.g. "being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger (or rage)"). Respondents were asked how frequently they personally experienced each negative act and response categories were 'never', 'now and then', 'monthly', 'weekly' and 'daily'.

**Coping strategies.** Items from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ; Pejtersen, Kristensen, Borg, & Bjorner, 2010) were used to measure three types of coping; problem-focused (4 items), resigned (2 items) and selective (4 items) coping. Alpha coefficients for the three scales were; .79, .73 and .76 respectively. Example items include 'tried to find out what you could do to solve the problem' (problem-focused), 'tried to think of something else or did something you enjoy' (selective) and 'accepted the situation because there was nothing to do about it anyway' (resigned). The stem question was: 'please think about your personal efforts to reduce bullying toward you. Indicate how often you have done each of the following over the past 6 months'. Scale labels were 'never' (0), 'now and then' (1), 'monthly' (2), 'weekly' (3), and 'daily' (4). All respondents were asked about their coping strategy, regardless of whether or not they self-labelled as being bullied.

**Subjective wellbeing.** Subjective wellbeing (SWB) was measured with 15 affect items, taken from Warr's (1990) scale. Eight items indicated positive affect (e.g. calm, optimistic) and 7 negative affect (e.g. tense, miserable). In line with the procedure followed by O'Driscoll et al (2011) SWB was calculated by reverse coding the negative affect items and calculating a mean score for all 15 items. Alpha coefficient for the SWB scale was .79.

**Psychological strain.** This was measured with 12 items from the General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg, 1978; Jackson, 2007). In response to the question 'over the past 6 months, to what extent have you felt each of the following' on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = 'not at all', 4 = 'much more than usual'). Six items were positively worded (e.g. 'been able to concentrate on what you were doing') and six negatively worded (e.g. 'felt consistently under strain'). Negatively worded items were reverse coded before a mean score was calculated. Coefficient alpha for this scale was .70.

**Performance.** Two items from the work performance questionnaire (Kessler et al., 2003) measured individual performance in response to the question; 'on a scale of 1-10, where 1 = worst performance anyone could have at your job and 10 = the performance of a top worker, how would you rate each of the following'. Items were; 'your own usual job performance over the past 6 months?' and 'your overall job performance on the days you have worked during the past 4 weeks?' Coefficient alpha for the items was .90.

**Control variables.** Age and gender have both been found to have a small but significant influence choice of coping strategy (Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004) so were included as controls. Country was also included to control for any cross-national differences (Van de Vliert, Einarsen, & Nielsen, 2013).

## Results

### Latent profiles

Latent class cluster analysis (LCC; Vermunt & Magidson, 2002) was performed on all of the NAQ-R items in MPlus (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). LCC empirically classifies respondents to mutually exclusive groups which are not directly observed (i.e. latent). The aim of LCC is to identify the smallest number of clusters which can explain the variance of dependent variables (Vermunt & Magidson, 2002). Based on the profile of answers to the NAQ-R displayed in each cluster, the researcher then labels the cluster to describe the characteristics of the respondents in that group, informed by theory and previous research (Notelaers et al., 2006). LCC begins with the assumption that all respondents belong to the same group so a 1 cluster solution is first tested, then 2, 3 and so on until no significant improvement in fit is achieved. Five clusters proved to be the best fit. As one would expect in a non-selective sample (Nielsen et al., 2010), the majority of respondents were not subjected to negative acts and were therefore labeled as 'not targeted' (N = 2026 / 63%). Three of the other clusters identified different frequencies of acts experienced across all of the items from more to less often; 'persistently targeted' (N = 97 / 3%), 'frequently targeted' (N = 202 / 6%), 'sometimes targeted' (N = 773 / 24%). Finally, one cluster reported a high frequency of only certain, work-related negative acts; "being ordered to do work below your level of competence", "someone withholding information which affects your performance", "being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work", "having your opinions and views ignored" and "having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks". As such, this cluster was labeled 'targeted with work-related bullying' (N = 119 / 4%). Using the same method, Notelaers and colleagues (2006) revealed only four clusters, but were using the 18 item NAQ rather than the revised 22 item scale (Einarsen et al., 2009),

which may account for the difference. A table of all 22 negative acts with mean frequencies by each cluster is included as an appendix.

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*Table 1 about here*  
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### **Hypothesis testing**

Correlation coefficients, means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1. Hypothesis 1 predicted that being bullied more frequently would result in more negative outcomes. This was tested through one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) as the dependent variables (SWB, psychological strain and performance) were expected to be correlated. The significance of the differences between the clusters was examined using Tukey's posthoc analysis (Tukey, 1949). MANOVA revealed a significant difference in all outcome variables explained by the clusters with an overall main effect of;  $F(3, 3155) = 30490.06, p < .001$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = 0.03$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .97$ . The main effects of the clusters on each outcome were also significant; SWB ( $F(3, 3155) = 99.78, p < .001$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .11$ ), psychological strain ( $F(3, 3155) = 211.91, p < .001$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .21$ ), and performance ( $F(3, 3155) = 83.43, p < .001$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .10$ ).

With respect to wellbeing outcomes, the pattern of relationships is as expected (Table 2). Those who were persistently targeted experienced the lowest levels of wellbeing ( $M = 3.44$ ) and high levels of psychological strain ( $M = 1.53$ ), although neither were significantly different from those frequently targeted. The relationships then follow the expected pattern in that those less frequently targeted reported more positive wellbeing outcomes. Individuals who were targeted with work-related acts did not experience significantly different levels of subjective wellbeing ( $M = 3.75$ ) than those sometimes or frequently targeted, as expected based on the frequency of acts experience by this group, but they experienced the highest

levels of psychological strain ( $M = 1.57$ ), not significantly different from those frequently or persistently targeted. With respect to the performance outcomes, the pattern was more mixed. Those who were frequently targeted reported the lowest levels of performance ( $M = 5.99$ ), lower than those who were persistent victims of negative acts ( $M = 6.91$ ). Surprisingly, respondents who were victims of workplace negative acts reported the highest levels of performance ( $M = 8.22$ ), contrary to hypothesis 1b.

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*Table 2 about here*  
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Ordinary least squares regression analysis was carried out to examine the hypothesized moderating effects (hypotheses 2, 3 and 4) with the models estimated in stages; 1) control variables, 2) the main effect of the bullying cluster on outcomes, 3) self-labeling or coping strategies and then 4) the predicted interaction effects. Neither age or gender were found to significantly predict the outcomes so were excluded from further analyses. In hypothesis 2, we predicted that individuals more frequently targeted who self-labeled as being bullied would report more negative wellbeing outcomes than those who did not self-label. As expected, self-labeling did moderate the impact of experiencing negative acts on some outcomes, although not consistently across all latent profiles (Table 4). Beginning with wellbeing outcomes; self-labeling had no impact on reported levels of psychological strain. In addition, somewhat contrary to the hypothesis, the impact of the *frequently x self-labeling* interaction on subjective wellbeing ( $\beta = 0.12, p < .05$ ), while significant, indicates that self-labeling makes no difference to the level of wellbeing for those frequently targeted (simple slopes analysis; Figure 2). Targets of work-related bullying reported lower levels of subjective wellbeing when they self-labeled ( $\beta = -0.22, p < .05$ ), in support of the hypothesis.

With respect to performance (hypothesis 3), the interactions between self-labelling and those who were frequently or persistently targeted were significant. The direction of the

interaction for those frequently targeted was as expected; those who also self-labeled as being bullied reported lower levels of performance than those who did not ( $\beta = -0.25, p < .05$ ). The relationship with respect to persistent targets was somewhat surprising. As expected, persistent targets reported far lower levels of performance than those who were not persistent targets. However, those who also self-labeled reported *higher* levels of performance than those who did not self-label ( $\beta = 0.32, p < .05$ ), although this difference was only very marginal. In support of hypothesis 3b, the interaction between work-related targets and self-labeling (Figure 3) revealed that targets of work-related bullying reported lower levels of performance when they self-labeled as being bullied and higher levels when they did not ( $\beta = -0.41, p < .05$ ).

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*Table 3 about here*  
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Hypothesis 4a predicted that individuals experiencing negative acts would report less negative outcomes if they adopted problem-focused coping. Due to the number of potential interactions, only significant interactions are summarized in table 4. In support of the hypothesis, individuals sometimes targeted reported marginally higher subjective wellbeing when adopting problem-focused coping ( $\beta = 0.11, p < .05$ ) than those who did not. Also in support of the hypothesis, those who were frequently targeted reported higher levels of performance ( $\beta = 0.26, p < .05$ ) than those who did not. This pattern was also supported with respect to performance; those targeted with work-related negative acts reported higher performance ( $\beta = 1.03, p < .05$ ) when adopting a problem-focused strategy. However, persistent targets reported higher levels of psychological strain when they adopted a problem-focused strategy ( $\beta = 0.22, p < .001$ ), contrary to the hypothesis. In hypothesis 3b, we predicted that resigned and selective coping would not be effective moderators, expecting more negative outcomes when these strategies are employed. Resigned coping did not

significantly interact with any of the latent classes to predict any outcomes, indicating no moderation effect. Only one interaction was significant with respect to selective coping. Individuals sometimes targeted with negative acts predicted lower levels of psychological strain ( $\beta = -0.43, p < .001$ ) but there was only a very marginal difference in their reported level of strain when adopting this strategy. Hypothesis 4b is therefore not supported, although these coping strategies did not effectively moderate the impact of negative acts on outcomes.

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*Table 4 about here*  
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### **Discussion**

The dominant approach to operationalizing the experience of workplace bullying is to examine the extent to which individuals are targeted with negative acts at work (Nielsen et al., 2011). A significant body of research supports the theory that experiencing more frequent and persistent negative acts predicts negative outcomes in relation to both wellbeing and performance (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). However, we know little about how individual reactions to these negative acts moderate the impact of them on outcomes (Bunk & Magley, 2013). We set out to examine the extent to which individuals' primary appraisal of the experience of negative acts (as indicated by them self-labeling as being bullied), and the coping strategies employed to deal with the negative acts moderated the impact of these acts on wellbeing and performance outcomes.

Adopting the latent class cluster technique of analyzing the NAQ-R we identified five clusters of negative acts; not targeted, sometimes targeted, frequently targeted, persistently targeted and targeted with work-related bullying. When examining the direct relationships between the clusters of negative acts, we found that, as expected, those targeted with more frequent negative acts on the whole reported lower levels of wellbeing and performance. Self-

labeling only moderated some of the relationships between the clusters and outcomes. Self-labeling made little difference to wellbeing outcomes. With respect to performance, while those frequently targeted reported lower performance when they self-labeled as being bullied, as expected, persistent targets were the opposite. Persistent targets who self-labeled reported higher levels of performance.

Unlike the clusters relating to the frequency of negative acts ('sometimes', 'frequently', 'persistently'), those targeted with work-related negative acts reported higher levels of performance. When examining the moderating effect of self-labeling, we found that higher performance was only reported for those who did not self-label as being bullied whereas those who did self-label reported lower levels of performance. This is an important finding as it would support the argument that work-related negative acts can sometimes be construed as performance enhancing or developmental (Samnani et al., 2013) but only when individuals believe that there is not malicious intent (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). Although this may be a controversial suggestion, it supports the importance of understanding not only the perception that the behavior is taking place, but also the way that it is perceived. It is also important to note, though, that while individuals experiencing work-related negative acts without identifying as being bullied reported higher levels of performance, they also reported low levels of subjective wellbeing, so this still comes at a cost (Dewe et al., 2010).

With respect to coping strategies, problem-focused coping was more effective on the whole than resigned or selective coping, which had little or no significant moderating effect on outcomes. Problem-focused coping was effective in reducing the negative impact for those sometimes targeted with negative acts with respect to wellbeing and those frequently targeted with respect to performance. It was less effective, however, for those persistently targeted and targets of work-related bullying. Persistent targets employing problem-focused coping reported higher levels of psychological strain. As these groups were experiencing the highest

levels of these stressors, this would support the theory that coping with stressors involves self-control and is therefore resource depleting (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Likewise, it is in line with Richman et al.'s (2001) findings that victims of harassment (i.e. persistent exposure to negative acts) reported higher levels of alcohol use when adopting problem-focused coping. However, those targeted with work-related negative acts reported higher performance when adopting problem-focused coping. It could be therefore that problem-focused coping with respect to work-related negative acts manifests as higher performance (Samnani et al., 2013).

### **Theoretical Importance**

This paper makes a number of important contributions to the workplace bullying literature. Firstly, we echo Magley and colleagues (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Cortina & Magley, 2009) in suggesting that individuals' appraisals of negative experience are an important consideration in understanding how they respond. We suggest that cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) should be considered a valuable theoretical framework for understanding individuals' responses to negative acts at work. We support this theoretical approach in finding that self-labeling, as an indicator of primary appraisal, moderates the impact of negative acts on wellbeing and performance outcomes. This also has methodological implications in that we suggest that behavioral and self-labeling measures of bullying should not be considered separate but rather interactive definitions of bullying. This approach recognizes that individuals' attributions are an important consideration as suggested by Samnani et al. (2013).

Secondly, we further our knowledge of coping with bullying. Rather than seeing coping as a mediator between being bullied and outcomes, which assumes that bullying predicts coping, which has been refuted, (Dehue et al., 2012; Hogh & Dofradottir, 2001;

Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004), we would rather suggest that it is the interaction between experiencing negative acts and the coping strategy employed that defines the outcomes. Our findings with respect to the different clusters of negative acts also offers a more nuanced view of the success of coping strategies than previous research (Dehue et al., 2012) in suggesting that active strategies are only successful for moderate levels of bullying, not more severe (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). This might explain the prior findings that we discussed at the outset which in some cases found problem-focused coping to be effective (e.g. Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, et al., 1986) and in others not (e.g. Richman et al., 2001). The present study would therefore support a definition of bullying behaviors which examines both the frequency and type of negative acts experienced, not simply whether or not someone is a victim of bullying.

Thirdly, we support recent research which has found that both the prevalence and type of bullying experienced is important (Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004). In particular, in finding that experiencing work-related negative acts might predict positive performance outcomes, we suggest that there might be some ambiguity in the experience of these at work (Samnani et al., 2013). This has implications for research which considers only the prevalence of negative acts, and might therefore be missing nuance. It is therefore important, within the domain of workplace bullying research, to recognize this distinction.

### **Practical Importance**

As highlighted by Samnani et al. (2013) one particular challenge is that bullying can be difficult to detect and this particularly seems the case with work-related bullying. On the one hand, asking someone whether or not they are bullied is a valuable and important step in trying to understand the outcomes of bullying and such attributions should be taken seriously. However, on the other, serious work-related negative acts could be taking place without the target identifying them as bullying behaviors. In organizations where these type of acts are an

issue, awareness campaigns or training might help in identifying these bullying behaviors (Fox & Cowan, 2015). Secondly, our finding that problem-focused coping is more effective only for more moderate, not persistent, levels of bullying has implications for bullying awareness and interventions. Any training, guidance or policy which aims to help targets to cope with bullying might helpfully emphasize problem-solving, but should also encourage targets to seek outside help so that they are not left to solve the problem by themselves. Our findings would suggest that victims left to solve the problem themselves are likely to experience higher levels of strain.

### **Limitations and future research**

Although the present research offers valuable insights into how individuals respond to negative acts, it is important to recognize some limitations. In particular, the present research is cross-sectional and, as such, inferences about causality cannot be made. Although, individual appraisals of negative acts can be seen as a simultaneous process (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), so our findings still shed light on individual interpretations of negative acts, future longitudinal research would enable an examination of appraisal as a process, which has had attention in the stress literature (Folkman, 1984). Future research would also benefit from using an objective or manager rating of performance, which reduces the risk of single method bias and would also strengthen causal inferences (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). This is a limitation of our self-report performance measure.

Secondly, it is important to recognize some climate-related factors which might impact on the generalizability of our findings. Firstly, with respect to the positive performance outcomes of work-related bullying, one factor which we are not able to account for in the present research is work climate, which is likely to moderate this relationship. For example, in high pressure environments, some of the work-related negative acts may be the

norm, and may therefore result in greater performance increases (Samnani & Singh, 2014) although higher performance demands are also associated with higher levels of stress (Samnani & Singh, 2012). Likewise, we did not account for the potential impact of other stressors arising from the work environment, such as role conflict or ambiguity (Bowling and Beehr, 2006), which might influence individuals' appraisal of the situation. Secondly, in interpreting the findings of the present study, we should also recognize the cultural context of Southeast Asia. Although research into bullying in Southeast Asia is very limited, there is evidence that the kind of negative acts that constitute bullying are prevalent in Asian countries (Yeung & Griffin, 2008). However, cross-cultural research has also suggested that cultural differences explain variation in both the prevalence (Van de Vliert, Einarsen & Nielsen, 2013) and the perceived acceptability of bullying (Power et al., 2013). The countries in the present study (Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Philippines) have relatively low levels of individualism and high power distance compared to Western European and US contexts (Hofstede, 2001) where bullying research is prevalent and, as such, there is evidence from cross-cultural studies which would suggest that our results regarding the outcomes of bullying might be conservative compared to these other cultural contexts. For example, Loh, Restubog and Zagenczyk (2010) found that countries high in power distance are likely to respond less negatively to workplace bullying. Likewise, research suggests that individuals in more collectivist cultures less freely express emotions (Eid & Diener, 2001) and that collectivism buffers against the potential negative effects of workplace bullying (Seo, Leather & Coyne, 2012). It has also been observed that, in Asian cultures characterized by high collectivism and power distance, there is likely to be a 'modesty bias' (Heidemeier & Moser, 2009) which suppresses self-reported performance which could likewise influence our results regarding performance outcomes. Despite these potential limitations to generalizability, we

believe that the insights into the influence of appraisal and coping of negative acts apply to any cultural context but would nonetheless benefit from replication in other cultural contexts.

In the present study, we have suggested one indicator of primary appraisal. It is, of course, likely that there are other factors which will influence how individuals respond to the experience of negative acts in the workplace. In particular, it is possible that individuals might appraise negative acts as threatening without self-labeling as being bullied. The explicit perception of threat (cf. Anderson & Hunter, 2012; Catterson & Hunter, 2010) might therefore further moderate the impact of experiencing bullying behavior on performance and wellbeing outcomes. Further research would therefore be valuable to examine individuals' perceptions of threat in relation to the experience of negative workplace acts as well as other types of primary appraisal such as control or blame (Catterson & Hunter, 2010). In addition, we focus in the present study on cognitive appraisal but, as demonstrated by Bunk and Magley (2013), individuals' affective responses to workplace incivility also impact on the outcomes of these experiences. Future research might, therefore, examine both self-labeling and affective responses to negative acts, in particular the nature of the relationship between affect and self-labeling (e.g. direction of causality, or level of reciprocity).

There are also a number of ways in which our conceptualization of coping could be expanded. Firstly, prior research influenced by cognitive appraisal theory has demonstrated that, before adopting specific coping behaviors, individuals evaluate their potential to cope with the situation, which can be seen as a form of secondary appraisal (Smith & Kirby, 2009). In other words, once individuals have identified themselves as being bullied, they then evaluate their potential to cope with the bullying (Lowe & Bennett, 2003) which is likely to influence the outcomes of the experience of being bullied, including the type of coping employed. Future research might valuably examine coping potential in order to build a more complete model of primary and secondary cognitive appraisals of bullying. Secondly, we

have adopted a measure which captures Folkman and Lazarus's (1980) definition of the functions of coping as problem-focused or emotion-focused. However, there are multiple ways to conceptualize coping, for example relating to specific coping behaviors, or in acknowledging that coping is a process which involves adaptation (cf. Dewe & Cooper, 2007; Dewe et al., 2010). As such, we believe that future research could expand upon this model to examine more specific forms of coping relating to the differentiated view of bullying that we adopt here.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that while we examined the experience of negative acts at work we did not ask respondents about the source of these acts (e.g. manager, coworker) as this was not the primary focus of the paper. This is an important consideration because it is likely that bullying perceived to originate from different sources, particularly with differing levels of power distance (Agervold, 2007; Salin, 2003; Saunders et al., 2007), will lead to different behavioral and attitudinal responses (e.g. Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Samnani et al., 2013). We would suggest, therefore, that considering the source alongside the other possible attributions suggested above would help scholars to formulate a more complete theory of cognitive appraisal in relation to being a target of bullying.

### **Conclusions**

In this paper we have drawn on Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and theories of coping to suggest that individuals' primary appraisals of and reactions to negative acts will moderate the impact of said acts on outcomes. In summary, we found that individual appraisals of negative acts are an important consideration when examining the outcomes of bullying, but particularly with respect to performance outcomes. Work-related negative acts, in particular, might result in higher performance if individuals do not believe the acts to be bullying but lower if they do. With respect to coping, we found problem-focused coping strategies to be more effective only when bullying is moderate. However, for persistent

targets, problem-focused coping predicted higher levels of psychological strain. These findings suggest, firstly, that it is not simply enough to examine either objective or subjective definitions of bullying but rather to examine the interaction between the two. Secondly, it suggests that while passive coping strategies do not mitigate the impact negative acts on outcomes, problem-focused coping is only effective in some circumstances.

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Table 1: Intra-class correlations, means and standard deviations for all variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Work-related targets	-	-												
2 Not targets	-	-	-.254**											
3 Sometimes targeted	-	-	-.110**	-.733**										
4 Frequently targeted	-	-	-.051**	-.337**	-.146**									
5 Persistently targeted	-	-	-.034	-.230**	-.099**	-.046**								
6 Self-label bullied	1.60	.88	-.087**	-.282**	.110**	.216**	.324**							
7 Problem-focused coping	1.89	.94	.042	-.075*	-.006	-.011	.143**	.100**						
8 Selective coping	1.88	.92	-.008	-.105**	-.032	.059	.199**	.140**	.602**					
9 Resigned coping	1.97	1.09	-.042	-.112**	-.007	.073*	.164**	.140**	.392**	.591**				
10 SWB	4.02	.66	-.084**	.314**	-.168**	-.149**	-.166**	-.213**	-.083*	-.099**	-.072*			
11 Psych. Strain	1.08	.46	.208**	-.422**	.191**	.219**	.170**	.178**	.024	.025	.094**	-.415**		
12 Performance	7.61	1.54	.076**	.178**	-.047**	-.274**	-.080**	-.249**	.117**	.045	-.012	.195**	-.221**	

$N = 3217$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

*Table 2: Results of MANOVA: Comparison of mean scores on outcome variables between latent profiles*

	Not bullied		Sometimes		Frequently		Persistently		Work-related		F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
SWB	4.19	0.64	3.84 <sup>a</sup>	0.55	3.65 <sup>b</sup>	0.55	3.44	0.65	3.75 <sup>ab</sup>	0.53	99.78
Psych. Strain	0.93	0.41	1.23	0.40	1.46 <sup>a</sup>	0.34	1.53 <sup>a</sup>	0.41	1.57 <sup>a</sup>	0.41	211.91
Performance	7.82	1.36	7.48	1.54	5.99	1.92	6.91	2.03	8.22	1.26	83.43

*Notes*

Values with identical superscripts within rows indicate that they are not statistically significant. Values without matching subscripts are statistically significant  $p < .05$

All F values have a df for the factor of 3 and a df of 3155 for the error term, all  $p < .001$

*Table 3: Comparison of mean scores on coping variables between latent profiles*

	Not bullied	Sometimes	Frequently	Persistently	Work-related	F
PF coping	1.82 <sup>a,c</sup>	1.88 <sup>c</sup>	1.86 <sup>a,c</sup>	2.37 <sup>b</sup>	2.20 <sup>a,b,c</sup>	5.49
Selective	1.78 <sup>a</sup>	1.84 <sup>a</sup>	2.05 <sup>a</sup>	2.53	1.83 <sup>a</sup>	10.91
Resigned	1.83 <sup>a</sup>	1.96 <sup>a</sup>	2.21 <sup>a,b</sup>	2.58 <sup>b</sup>	1.67 <sup>a</sup>	7.83

*Notes*

Values with identical subscripts within rows indicate that they are not statistically significant. Values without matching subscripts are statistically significant  $p < .05$

All F values have a df for the factor of 4 and a df of at least 4787 for the error term, all  $ps < .001$

Table 4: Ordinary Least Squares Regression results for interaction between self-label and latent classes on outcomes

	SWB		Psych strain		Performance	
	B	t	B	t	B	t
<i>Step 1</i>						
Cambodia	-0.45***	-14.88	-0.06**	-2.92	0.16*	2.11
Philippines	-0.06	-1.58	0.17***	6.06	0.92***	9.76
Vietnam	-0.28***	-5.31	0.06	1.56	-0.60***	-4.78
R2	0.09		0.13		0.14	
	46.065***		70.18***		73.85***	
$\Delta F (df)$	(3, 2292)		(3, 2292)		(3, 2262)	
<i>Step 2</i>						
Sometimes	-0.46***	-6.80	0.29***	5.90	-0.34*	-2.06
Frequently	-0.78***	-6.47	0.52***	5.99	-0.35	-1.22
Persistently	-0.88***	-5.19	0.66***	5.34	-1.3**	-3.15
Work-related	-0.36**	-2.94	0.61***	6.90	0.31	1.01
R2	0.22		0.26		0.16	
$\Delta R2$	0.13		0.12		0.02	
	92.36***		94.19***		13.78***	
$\Delta F (df)$	(4, 2288)		(4, 2288)		(4, 2258)	
<i>Step 3</i>						
Self_label_bullying	-0.12***	-4.71	0.08***	4.15	-0.06	-0.99
R2	0.23		0.26		0.16	
$\Delta R2$	0.01		0.01		0.00	
	22.59***		16.42***		0.74	
$\Delta F (df)$	(1, 2287)		(1, 2287)		(1, 2257)	
<i>Step 4</i>						
Self label x sometimes	0.05	1.54	-0.03	-0.99	0.10	1.13
Self label x frequently	0.12*	2.59	-0.05	-1.40	-0.25*	-2.10
Self label x persistently	0.08	1.48	-0.07	-1.78	0.32*	2.43
Self label x work-related	-0.22**	-2.67	-0.07	-1.24	-0.41*	-1.88
R2	0.23		0.26		0.17	
$\Delta R2$	0.01		0.00		0.01	
	7.70**		1.26		4.82**	
$\Delta F (df)$	(4, 2283)		(4, 2283)		(4, 2253)	

Notes:

N = 2298, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

*Table 5: Significant interactions from Ordinary Least Squares regression results for interaction between latent classes and coping strategies on all outcomes*

		SWB	Psych. strain	Performance
Interaction between:	and:			
Problem-focused coping	Sometimes	0.110*	-	-
	Frequently	-	-	0.594*
	Persistently	-	0.216***	-
	Work-related	-	-	1.028*
Selective coping	Sometimes	-	-	-0.430***
	Frequently	-	-	-
	Persistently	-	-	-
	Work-related	-	-	-
Resigned coping	Sometimes	-	-	-
	Frequently	-	-	-
	Persistently	-	-	-
	Work-related	-	-	-

Note:

$N = 2298$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Only significant interaction effects are reported. - indicates no significant interaction

Figure 1: Theoretical model and hypotheses

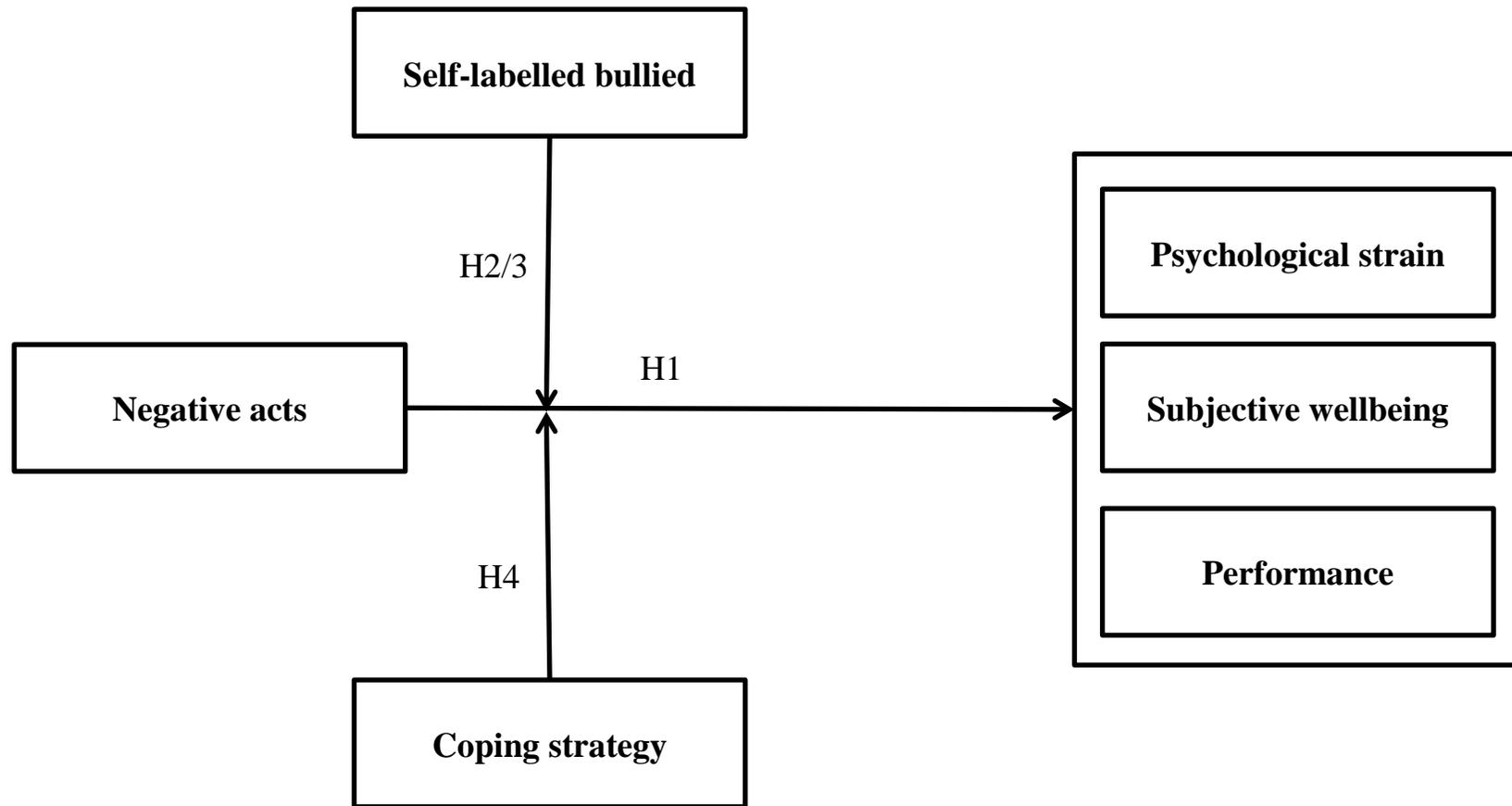


Figure 2: Self-labeling as a moderator of the relationship between being frequently bullied and subjective wellbeing

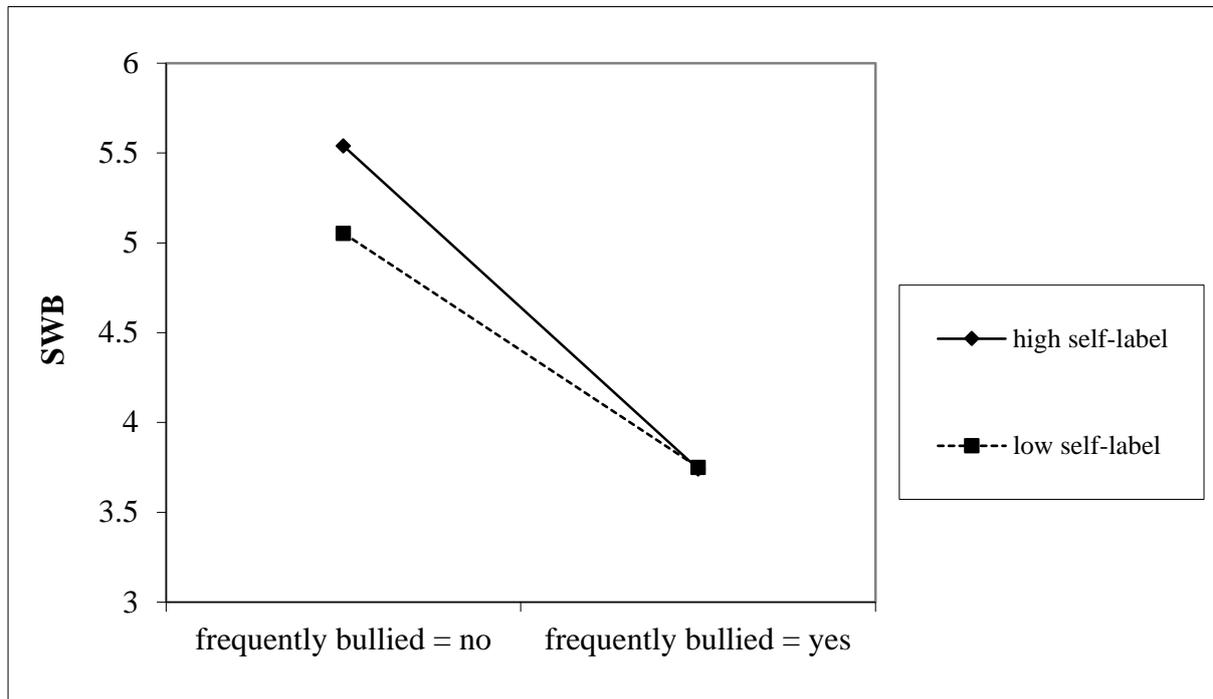
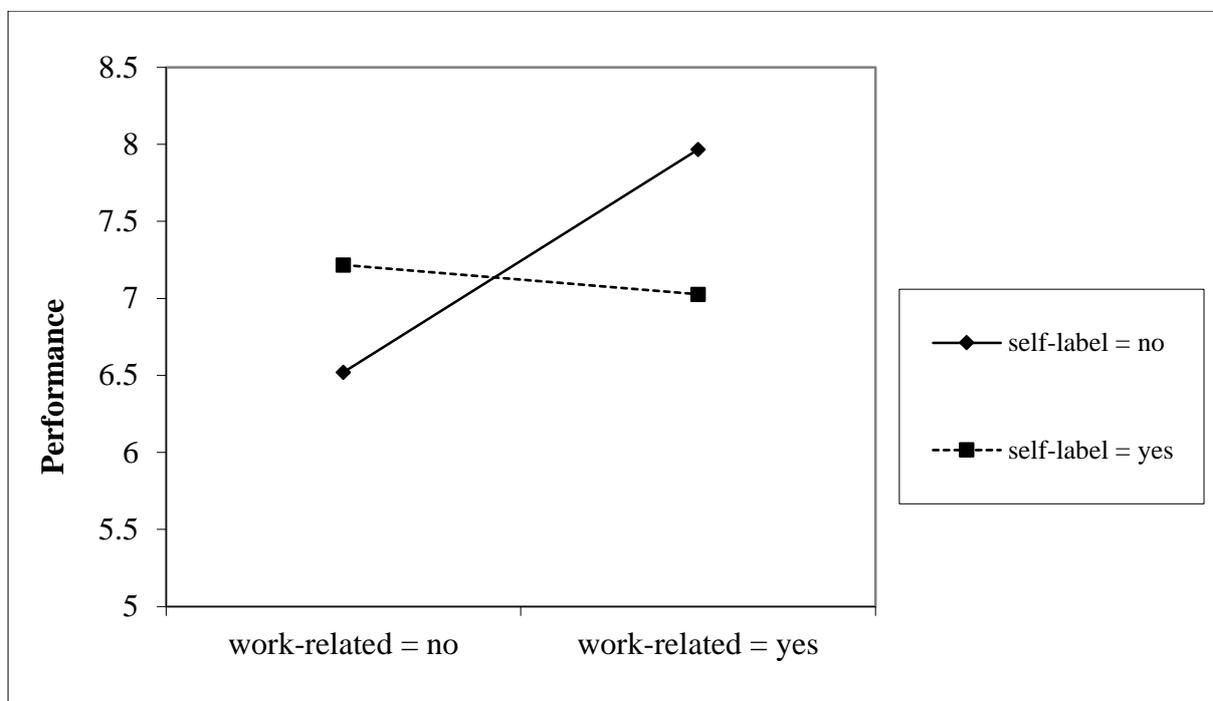


Figure 3: Self-labeling as a moderator of the relationship between being work-related bullied and performance



## APPENDIX

NAQ-R items:	Mean scores				
	Not bullied	Sometimes	Frequently	Persistently	Work-related
<b>N (%) respondents in cluster</b>	<b>2026 (63%)</b>	<b>773 (24%)</b>	<b>202 (6%)</b>	<b>97 (3%)</b>	<b>119 (4%)</b>
<b>Mean all items</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>1.22</b>
someone withholding information which affects your performance	.52	1.10	2.01	3.11	2.30
being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	.33	1.02	2.25	3.29	2.09
being ordered to do work below your level of competence	.50	1.10	2.17	3.22	2.53
having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	.37	.91	2.16	3.29	2.24
spreading of gossip and rumours about you	.42	1.03	2.55	3.18	1.79
being ignored or excluded	.33	.66	2.49	3.25	1.45
having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life	.27	.69	2.56	3.32	.84
being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger (or rage)	.45	1.42	2.13	3.36	1.10
intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way	.23	1.16	2.06	3.22	.69
hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	.25	.97	2.01	3.14	.74
repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	.38	1.28	2.18	3.36	.84
being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	.25	.93	2.31	3.54	.91
persistent criticism of your work and effort	.32	1.21	2.19	3.52	.69
having your opinions and views ignored	.60	1.84	2.26	3.26	1.53
practical jokes carried out by people you don't get on with	.32	1.49	2.16	3.54	1.33
being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	.49	1.75	2.07	3.18	1.44
having allegations made against you	.32	1.58	2.19	3.11	1.01
excessive monitoring of your work	.45	2.12	2.46	3.32	1.08
pressure not to claim something which by right you are entitled to (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses)	.27	1.45	2.37	3.04	.74
being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	.22	1.06	2.11	3.36	.54
being exposed to an unmanageable workload	.32	1.21	2.34	3.19	.60
threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	.12	.84	1.77	3.11	.30