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VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE:

UMBRELLA REVIEWS

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Violence and Harassment in the Workplace: Umbrella Reviews

Abstract

This technical report presents the findings of a grant-funded project, dedicated to exploring the complex issue of workplace violence and mistreatment. Its ultimate aim is to augment the global understanding of this subject and yield actionable insights applicable to a diverse range of organizations, businesses, and corporations across various sectors. Specifically, this project was conducted in two distinct yet interconnected phases. Utilizing an exhaustive, cross-disciplinary literature search, the project's first phase located five existing umbrella reviews on various forms of workplace violence and harassment. The in-depth analysis of these reviews facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the domain by aggregating insights from an array of synthesis research studies. This methodology underscored the most salient and recurrent findings across multiple studies, encompassing areas such as prevalence, risk determinants, mediating and moderating factors, repercussions, and intervention strategies. Detailed discussions of each topic were presented, providing a comprehensive overview of current knowledge and its implications. The project's second phase involved an umbrella review of nine synthesis research studies focusing on interventions for workplace mistreatment. This part aimed

to provide empirically supported recommendations for strategies and interventions to prevent and mitigate workplace mistreatment. The findings revealed the prevalence of workplace mistreatment and identified that certain interventions are more effective than others. Due to the multifaceted and complex nature of workplace mistreatment, it was suggested that multi-level, multi-target, and multi-component interventions be implemented. Furthermore, the research underscored the significance of leadership commitment in the successful implementation of interventions and the transformation of organizational culture. In conclusion, this project contributes to a comprehensive understanding of workplace mistreatment and its prevention, providing invaluable insights for practitioners. By informing strategy and intervention design with empirical evidence, this project aimed to equip organizations with the necessary tools to combat this pressing issue effectively.

Keywords: Workplace violence; workplace harassment; intervention strategies; organizational culture; leadership commitment; umbrella reviews; synthesis research; research-practitioner partnership; translational criminology

Introduction and Overview

A notable case that has significantly shaped public understanding of workplace violence is the incident that transpired at the U.S. Postal Service, often referred to as the "Edmond Post Office Massacre." On August 20, 1986, a postal employee named Patrick Sherrill, notorious for his disciplinary problems and frequent clashes with colleagues, launched a shooting spree at his workplace in Edmond, Oklahoma. In this tragic event, Sherrill killed 14 coworkers, including the postmaster, before committing suicide. An additional six employees sustained injuries but survived. This grievous occurrence not only seized extensive media attention but also fueled broader conversations about the prevention of workplace violence across different sectors (Piquero et al., 2013).

The field of workplace violence and mistreatment has witnessed a remarkable expansion over the past three decades, with a surge in scholarly attention and numerous individual studies devoted to exploring the intricacies of the issue. Given the considerable volume of research, synthesis methods such as systematic reviews and meta-analytic approaches have become increasingly pertinent to amalgamate and interpret these discrete findings. Furthermore, a higher-level synthesis approach, known as umbrella reviews, has been adopted to consolidate these synthesis studies. Despite such concerted efforts, the sheer abundance of research continues to pose challenges in effectively organizing and deploying this knowledge. Hence, there is a pressing need to translate these findings into practice in a comprehensible and systematic manner, particularly to help in the prevention and reduction of workplace violence and mistreatment. This project seeks to address this need by providing a comprehensive and integrative review of existing synthesis studies, with a specific focus on their implications for the real-world application in various organizational contexts.

This report is organized in a manner that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of workplace violence and harassment, beginning with a literature review focusing on the conceptualization issues, prevalence, and financial costs associated with these phenomena. Following this, the report delves into a more detailed description of the current project, including

an explanation of the meticulous process undertaken to search and review the relevant literature. Subsequently, the findings of this project are presented, which are bifurcated into two distinct parts. The first part encapsulates a synthesis of findings from prior umbrella reviews and a content analysis of their implications for practice. The second part, which forms the core of this project, features an umbrella review of synthesis research concentrating on a specific topic: interventions for various forms of workplace violence and harassment. The report culminates with a concluding section that offers guidance on how to translate these project findings into practice, thus underscoring the pragmatic value of this project.

What is workplace violence and harassment?

Within the body of primary research that investigates the issue of workplace violence and harassment, a myriad of terms has been employed to define and describe the phenomenon. This diverse terminological landscape, while reflecting the multifaceted nature of the problem, has also created challenges for researchers aiming to compare, contrast, and synthesize findings across multiple studies. Hence, as an imperative starting point in this report, we will delve into these definitional and measurement conundrums. By addressing these challenges head-on, we aim to streamline the terminological landscape, thereby facilitating clearer comparisons and furthering our comprehension of workplace violence and mistreatment. This process will also aid in enhancing the validity and reliability of future research, ensuring a more unified, precise, and comprehensive understanding of this pervasive issue.

Enacted workplace aggression has been examined under different labels such as social undermining, incivility, bullying, abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict, emotional abuse, generalized workplace abuse, mobbing, and workplace harassment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis, 2011). Similarly, research investigating mistreatment has utilized various constructs, such as anti-social behavior, counterproductive work behaviors, interpersonal deviance, retaliation, revenge, and workplace aggression (Hershcovis, 2011). A proliferation of terminologies and constructs has led to challenges in synthesizing and comparing research findings. The varying labels employed to describe similar phenomena contribute to conceptual confusion and hinder the development of a unified understanding of workplace violence and harassment.

Researchers have been divided as to whether workplace violence or workplace mistreatment should be conceptualized broadly or more narrowly (Dhanani et al., 2021). Specifically, some researchers argue for a broader, inclusive approach, recognizing the conceptual and measurement overlaps observed across various terminologies. They emphasize the need to consider the common underlying elements and shared experiences across different constructs to foster a comprehensive understanding of workplace mistreatment. For example, Bowling and Beehr (2006) integrated multiple forms of mistreatment and combined the correlational relationships among these mistreatment variables and their associated outcomes in their meta-analysis exploring the predictors and consequences of workplace harassment. They contended that despite being labeled differently in the literature, these forms of harassment essentially refer to the same overarching phenomenon.

Conversely, other scholars advocate for a narrower approach, asserting that the unique features and distinct boundaries of each construct should be preserved. They argue that different forms of workplace mistreatment entail specific dynamics, motivations, and outcomes, which warrant their separate categorization. For example, in their systematic review, Piquero et al. (2013) adopted a narrow definition of workplace violence viewing it as a distinct form of workplace aggression, specifically referring to behaviors intended to cause physical harm, to synthesize previous research findings. According to this perspective, it is understood that all violent behaviors are considered aggressive, while not all aggressive behaviors necessarily entail violence (Barling et al., 2009, p. 673).

Hershcovis (2011) conducted qualitative synthesis research to analyze the construct definitions, assumptions, and measurements of five example mistreatment constructs studied in the literature, including abusive supervision, bullying, incivility, social undermining, and interpersonal conflict. She found a significant overlap between items within the different measures. For instance, bullying, incivility, and abusive supervision all include items that concern derogatory comments, ignoring or giving silent treatment, and being rude. These findings indicate that despite each construct having distinguishing features, there exists considerable definitional, conceptual, and measurement overlap across these terminologies.

Furthermore, Hershcovis (2011) conducted a supplementary meta-analysis to conduct quantitative comparisons between different types of mistreatments and attitudinal (i.e., job satisfaction, turnover intent, and affective commitment) and well-being (i.e., psychological and physical) outcomes to determine whether any patterns emerge. The results showed that there is not a predictable pattern of outcomes from these constructs, implying that the current state of the field is such that we have multiple different constructs testing many of the same relationships, because of the limitations of the commonly used methods and measures used to study workplace aggressions. Hershcovis (2011) argued that a narrower approach to differentiate these (and other) aggression constructs does not add appreciably to our knowledge of workplace aggression.

The conceptual definitions of workplace violence and harassment-related terminologies continue to be a subject of debate among scholars, with some emphasizing the significance of distinguishing between these constructs in research studies. However, Hershcovis' (2011) work, providing valuable insights into the interplay of different types of mistreatments, has had a notable impact on meta-analysts, leading to a shift toward a more inclusive approach. More meta-analysts have considered a broader perspective that encompasses multiple forms of mistreatment, recognizing the potential overlap and interrelationships between different conceptualizations. For instance, in the most recent meta-analysis on the prevalence and financial cost, Dhanani et al. (2021) defined workplace mistreatment using an inclusive list of mistreatment constructs studied in the organizational sciences (i.e., abusive supervision, bullying, discrimination, exclusion/ostracism, general harassment, incivility, interpersonal conflict, psychological aggression, sexual harassment, undermining, and physical violence).

In line with the recommendations put forth by Hershcovis (2011) and other prominent meta-analysts (Dhanani et al., 2021), the present study abandons construct differentiation but agrees on one label and one way to operationalize the broad construct—call it “workplace violence and harassment,” which encompasses a range of interpersonal mistreatment forms

characterized by variations in severity, persistence, motivation, and source. The definition employed in this study aligns with Bowling and Beehr (2006), who describe workplace violence and harassment as interpersonal behavior intended to intentionally harm another employee within the workplace (p. 998). By utilizing this terminology, the study acknowledges the intricate nature of workplace violence-related phenomena. Moreover, this inclusive approach is crucial because it recognizes that subtle forms of mistreatment, such as incivility, are not only prevalent but can have comparable detrimental effects as more overt forms of mistreatment, including violence and sexual assault. Adopting this comprehensive perspective enables a comprehensive understanding of the impact of workplace mistreatment on various outcomes (Dhanani et al., 2021).

Prevalence and Financial Cost

The prevalence of workplace violence and harassment has been the subject of extensive empirical research, with numerous studies shedding light on its occurrence and impact. Accordingly, the topic has garnered significant attention in the form of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Among the comprehensive studies examining workplace mistreatment prevalence, the meta-analysis conducted by Dhanani et al. (2021) stands out as one of the most robust and up-to-date investigations, providing a comprehensive and accurate accounting of the prevalence. Specifically, Dhanani et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of 543 primary studies that collectively examine the experiences of nearly 1 million employees residing within 62 countries.

According to estimates, the average prevalence rate of experienced mistreatment stands at 34%, with specific forms of mistreatment varying in prevalence from 16% (bullying) to 75% (incivility). Additionally, approximately 44% of employees reported witnessing mistreatment in their workplace. These findings, derived from a meta-analysis conducted by Dhanani et al. (2021), demonstrate relatively consistent prevalence rates across time and sampling strategies. However, variations were observed based on the measurement characteristics employed and the degree of workers' rights protection.

It is crucial to acknowledge that even these high prevalence rates may be conservative estimates due to the universal recognition that a significant number of victims refrain from reporting abuse. This reluctance to report mistreatment can stem from various factors, including fear of reprisals, lack of confidence in the efficacy of corrective action, or feeling compelled to resign due to the health injuries arising from such mistreatment (Schindeler & Reynald, 2017). As a result, a substantial portion of mistreatment incidents may remain unaccounted for, underscoring the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the true extent of workplace mistreatment.

Dhanani et al. (2021) next utilized the meta-analytic prevalence rate estimates to extrapolate the financial implications of mistreatment, accounting for heightened sickness absences and productivity losses. The projected cost was substantial, ranging from \$691.70 billion to \$1.97 trillion annually. Dhanani et al. (2021) cautioned that their estimates might offer a conservative outlook on the total cost of mistreatment, as they solely account for increased sickness absences and productivity losses. Other pertinent costs, such as heightened healthcare

utilization, turnover expenses, and litigation costs, were not factored in, all of which could significantly augment the presented estimates. Furthermore, the study by Dhanani et al. (2021) did not encompass an estimation of the cost associated with witnessed mistreatment, as no available data exist on the lost productivity or sickness absences resulting from witnessing such incidents.

Considering the extensive body of literature linking workplace violence and harassment to a range of detrimental consequences, the findings of Dhanani et al. (2021) concerning the prevalence and financial implications of workplace mistreatment emphasize the urgency for organizations to take proactive measures in curbing such behavior. These results strongly advocate for the need to implement strategies aimed at reducing workplace mistreatment and fostering healthier, more productive work environments. Although not the primary focus of their research, Dhanani et al. (2021) explored the impact of legislation aimed at safeguarding workers' rights. Their findings indicate that countries with stronger legal protections for workers tend to exhibit lower prevalence rates of mistreatment, underscoring the effectiveness of legal initiatives in mitigating such behavior. With their primary focus limited to legislation, Dhanani et al. (2021) proposed future research endeavors to assess the impact of diverse interventions targeting the prevention and reduction of mistreatment.

Problem Statement

Workplace violence and harassment—“a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aims at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm” (International Labour Organization, Convention No. 190)—are widespread and pose a significant concern for security practitioners and personnel in companies and organizations. The severity of this issue is well-founded, as exposure to workplace violence is known to result in a wide range of adverse consequences, including physical and mental health disorders or injuries, job insecurity, decreased job performance, reduced affective commitment, increased intent to turnover, and organizational dysfunction.

The high prevalence estimates of workplace mistreatment, its detrimental consequences, and associated costs make clear the need for sustained efforts from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to eliminate mistreatment (Dhanani et al., 2021). Effective and evidence-based interventions are essential to prevent and reduce such violence and enhance safety in the workplace. The lack of understanding of the root causes of workplace violence and the effects of approaches to prevent violence in the workplace presents a major challenge in developing such policies and interventions. Importantly, the lack of knowledge is not due to a lack of studies on the subject. Empirical research on the antecedents of workplace violence and preventive interventions for workplace violence has accumulated over the years. Notably, peer-reviewed journals such as *Workplace Health & Safety*, *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, and *Journal of Organizational Behavior* are specifically devoted to this topic.

As the empirical literature on workplace violence and harassment rapidly expands, it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate and extract the best evidence from the highly diverse

body of work. One of the main reasons for this challenge is the lack of effort to organize the extensive knowledge that has been produced. To advance our understanding of the nature of workplace violence and which organizations and individuals are at greater risk of being victimized, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive review of the extensive body of empirical studies. After decades of research in this area, it is crucial to determine with certainty the main individual, victim-perpetrator relational, and occupational-level sources of workplace violence and harassment that are revealed by the existing literature.

Focusing on two core elements of prevention, that is, antecedents (risk and protective factors) for workplace violence and the effectiveness of (preventative) interventions, we will conduct a meta-analysis. The primary *objectives* of the meta-analysis are to inform evidence-based detection and prevention methodologies and policies by: (1) organizing the existing empirical knowledge base regarding workplace violence; (2) identifying the key individual, victim-perpetrator relational, and occupational characteristics that need to be changed and/or intervened to reduce workplace violence; (3) determining if and how the prevalence and antecedents of workplace violence perpetration and victimization differ among various occupational domains; and (4) assessing the effectiveness of existing prevention interventions (at the employee and organization levels). This project provides a unique opportunity to develop comprehensive approaches to workplace violence and harassment prevention.

Brief Description of Data Source

To address the concern expressed by the Institute For Homeland Security regarding the need for a teachable “*detection and prevention methodology for security practitioners and company personnel*,” this project aims to synthesize the existing empirical evidence on workplace mistreatment interventions. Recently, a substantial number of meta-analyses and systematic reviews that specifically focus on interventions for workplace violence have been conducted. These comprehensive studies have analyzed and synthesized existing research on various intervention approaches. Recognizing the value of these prior synthesis studies, this project conducted the umbrella review to synthesize the meta-analyses and systematic reviews on workplace mistreatment interventions. The umbrella review approach is particularly useful when dealing with large bodies of literature and when a consensus has not been reached on the effectiveness of different prevention/intervention approaches. By synthesizing all existing empirical evidence, the umbrella review can provide more concrete insights into the importance of specific interventions or approaches’ effectiveness.

This project adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, employing strict criteria for the inclusion of studies, comprehensive search strategies to identify eligible studies and a detailed protocol for coding study characteristics. The search for meta-analysis or systematic review discussing the prevalence, correlates, and predictors of workplace mistreatment, as well as approaches to prevent and mitigate workplace mistreatment, were conducted in three phases. In the first phase, an extensive literature search was conducted through electronic databases for empirical studies published up to 2023. Mirroring Dhanani et al. (2021), the exhausting list of mistreatment keywords used in the search stage, including discrimination, sexual harassment, sex harassment, incivility, exclusion, ostracism, conflict, violence, aggression, bullying, abusive supervision,

harassment, mistreatment, or counterproductive work behavior. In the second phase, electronic holdings of various journals were searched for any remaining relevant studies that are not identified during the database searches. In the third phase, the reference lists of previous literature reviews, reports, and smaller synthesis studies were examined for any additional studies that are not located through the earlier database and journal searches.

Topic Discussion

The findings section of this research encompasses two principal components, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of workplace violence and harassment. The first part involves a narrative review of previous umbrella reviews on workplace violence and harassment. This analysis aims to identify the existing gaps and insights in the workplace literature, shedding light on what has been extensively studied and, conversely, what aspects require further exploration. In the second part, the focus shifts to the core objective of the current research: a comprehensive umbrella analysis of previous meta-analyses and systematic reviews on interventions for workplace violence and harassment. By synthesizing and evaluating these diverse studies, this section seeks to provide a holistic perspective on the effectiveness and impact of interventions aimed at addressing workplace violence and harassment. Together, these two components contribute significantly to advancing our knowledge and comprehension of the complexities surrounding workplace violence and harassment.

Previous Umbrella Reviews: A Comparative Examination of Synthesis Studies across Healthcare and Multiple Occupations

In the realm of evidence-based research, umbrella reviews serve as vital tools for collating and appraising the findings of multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses. These comprehensive assessments offer valuable insights into the cumulative body of evidence on various subjects, ranging from healthcare to multiple occupational domains. This section provides a comprehensive overview of the key findings derived from an analysis of five umbrella reviews, found through a thorough and exhaustive search process. In this section, we aim to present the synthesized outcomes of these umbrella reviews, shedding light on the critical aspects of workplace violence and mistreatment.

To ensure clarity and ease of understanding, we have organized the findings into three distinct tables. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the workplace violence umbrella reviews, providing essential context for the subsequent analyses. In Table 2, we outline the main findings derived from the umbrella reviews, offering a concise yet comprehensive overview of the patterns and trends identified across the umbrella reviews. Furthermore, in Table 3, we delve into the practical implications suggested by the authors of the umbrella reviews to prevent and effectively manage workplace mistreatment. By presenting these implications, we hope to equip readers with valuable insights into potential strategies and interventions to address this pertinent issue.

Characteristics of Previous Umbrella Reviews

As observed in Table 1, these umbrella reviews diverged in their subject matter, with three dedicated exclusively to scrutinizing systematic reviews and meta-analyses within the healthcare sector, while the remaining two encompassed synthesis studies from diverse occupational backgrounds. Spanning a timeframe from 2001 to 2022, the synthesized studies within these reviews hailed from different countries, presenting a diverse array of research landscapes for examination and analysis. Through an in-depth investigation, this project seeks to elucidate the distinguishing features, methodologies, and key findings of these previous umbrella reviews, contributing to a deeper understanding of their utility and impact in evidence-based practice and policymaking.

Main Findings of Previous Umbrella Reviews

This section unveils a comprehensive compilation of key insights derived from in-depth analysis of five umbrella reviews. The findings are organized according to the main thematic clusters present in each umbrella review. The subsequent subsections of themes explore these findings in detail, discussing their significance and relevance in the broader context of evidence-based practice and policy formulation.

Prevalence

The latest umbrella review conducted by Rossi et al. (2023) rigorously examined a total of 19 meta-analyses and 13 systematic reviews, all centered on exploring the pervasive issue of workplace violence targeting healthcare workers worldwide. The main findings are as follows:

- The overall prevalence of violence among healthcare workers reached alarming rates, with reports as high as 78.9%.
- Psychiatric nurses were identified as the most affected professional group.
- Medical residents experienced the highest prevalence of sexual harassment, with rates reaching 36.2%.
- Trainees in the medical field encountered a distressing situation, with up to 95% reporting experiencing at least one form of harassment or discrimination during their medical education.
- Among the reviewed studies, some indicated higher incidences of violence among females, while others reported a higher prevalence among males.
- Non-physical aggression has received insufficient attention in the reviewed literature.
- Despite the commitment of the European Commission and the exacerbation of this issue due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been no unified response to address this alarming trend.
- In emergency departments and psychiatric units, where workplace violence occurs most frequently, it is disturbingly accepted as a normal aspect of healthcare workers' job function.

In their comprehensive study, Sahebi et al. (2022) undertook an umbrella review to examine the prevalence of workplace violence targeting healthcare workers in both hospital and pre-hospital settings across five countries: Canada, China, India, Iran, and the USA. Through a meticulous analysis of 14 meta-analyses, the researchers were able to derive more precise

prevalence figures. The results revealed that physical violence, verbal violence, and sexual harassment were all prevalent issues experienced by healthcare workers, with prevalence rates of 58.7%, 20.8%, 66.8%, and 10.5%, respectively. These findings provide valuable insights into the widespread nature of workplace mistreatment within the healthcare sector, highlighting the urgency of addressing and mitigating this critical issue to safeguard the well-being and safety of healthcare professionals.

Nielsen and Einarsen (2018) conducted a comprehensive review with the aim of offering an up-to-date overview of the existing knowledge on workplace bullying across a wide array of occupations in 33 individual countries, along with multi-country comparisons. To achieve this, the researchers synthesized the findings from 10 meta-analyses and 8 systematic reviews published between 2010 and 2018. Through their meticulous analysis, the study revealed a number of key insights. One of the main findings was the significant prevalence of workplace bullying across various occupational settings, emphasizing the pervasive nature of this issue.

Nielsen and Einarsen's (2018) study revealed the following key findings about the prevalence of workplace bullying:

- Roughly 15% of employees globally experience workplace bullying, though the rates fluctuate significantly based on methodological aspects and regional background.
- A clear geographical influence on prevalence rates is evident, with Scandinavian countries demonstrating notably lower rates compared to other European nations and the United States.
- Demographic elements like gender and occupation also contribute to variations in bullying prevalence rates.
- Occupations dominated by men, particularly those involving object-related tasks, and those dominated by women, especially roles dealing with clients or patients, showed a higher incidence of bullying.

Risk factors

In their respective research, Martinez (2016) and Sahebi et al. (2022) carried out comprehensive evaluations of the risk factors associated with workplace maltreatment, specifically within healthcare environments. Their rigorous investigations offer valuable insights into the predisposing elements that enhance the likelihood of workplace aggression, thereby creating a foundation for further study and policy development. Key findings related to risk factors from Martinez's study (2016) include:

- Environmental risks: Inadequate security, service delays, and close contact with potentially hazardous individuals were identified as primary environmental risk factors.
- Patient-related risks: Patients' access to firearms and substance misuse were significant risk factors.
- Staff-related risks: Lack of or insufficient training to manage aggressive behaviors, understaffing, and instances of working in isolation were predominant staff risk factors.

Key findings related to risk factors from Sahebi's research (2022) encompass:

- Patient-related factors: Critical medical conditions, delirium, personality disorders, and the absence of established relationships in hospital and pre-hospital environments contribute to a higher rate of violence against healthcare workers compared to home healthcare workers.
- Institutional factors: Insufficient information, inadequate staffing, and a lack of suitable equipment escalate the risk of workplace violence in healthcare services.
- Interpersonal and psychological factors: Workplace stress, poor relationships with colleagues, and a lack of social support can further catalyze workplace violence in healthcare settings.

Nielsen and Einarsen's (2018) research, applicable to a variety of occupations, uncovered the following key findings related to the risk factors of workplace bullying:

- The research supports both the work-environment hypothesis and the individual disposition hypothesis, suggesting that workplace factors and personal dispositions equally contribute to an increased risk of bullying.
- Longitudinal studies, primarily over periods of one to two years, consistently revealed that pre-existing mental health issues can forecast subsequent exposure to workplace bullying.

Consequences

The umbrella review conducted by Martinez (2016) sheds light on the repercussions of workplace mistreatment in healthcare settings, specifically among nurses:

- Nurses exposed to workplace aggression can exhibit a range of emotional responses including anger, frustration, feelings of despair, hypervigilance, symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, or anxiety. This could potentially lead them to consider exiting the nursing profession.
- Physical assaults on nurses can result in both fatal and nonfatal injuries. These incidents have the potential to compromise their ability to fulfill their job responsibilities effectively.

Based on the umbrella review which focused on workplace bullying across diverse professions, Nielsen and Einarsen (2018) discovered:

- Workplace bullying seems to have a significant correlation with the development of subsequent mental health issues. This finding is consistently observed in both generic and occupation-specific samples across different nations.

Mediators and Moderators

In their robust analysis, Zhang et al. (2019) extensively explored the mediating and moderating factors that influence workplace dynamics. The study involved a comprehensive umbrella review of six meta-analyses, primarily centered around the moderating impact of

cultural dimensions - particularly, the dichotomy of masculinity, which underscores achievement, and femininity, which prioritizes relationships. The researchers were specifically interested in understanding these factors' effect on the link between abusive supervision and two key aspects of employee behavior. These included organizational citizenship behavior, defined as voluntary, extra-role conduct, and counterproductive work behavior. Key findings from the study conducted by Zhang et al. (2019) are as follows:

- Abusive supervision was found to have a negative correlation with organizational justice (viewed through the justice lens) and a positive correlation with work stress (viewed through the resource lens). These relationships resulted in a decrease in organizational citizenship behavior and an escalation in counterproductive work behavior.
- When considering the influence of abusive supervision on organizational citizenship behavior, organizational justice emerged as a more substantial factor compared to work stress. However, work stress had a greater impact on the occurrence of counterproductive work behavior resulting from abusive supervision.
- In cultures emphasizing masculinity, abusive supervision was linked with increased counterproductive work behavior.

Interventions

While the primary emphasis of existing umbrella reviews has not been on interventions, a couple of these reviews have briefly touched upon the subject, yielding some insightful observations. To illustrate, Martinez (2016) uncovered several interesting points in relation to interventions employed within healthcare settings:

- The study classified the interventions into three broad categories: environmental interventions, those based on practices and policies, and interventions focused on developing skills.
- Some primary studies indicate that employing evidence-based interventions can potentially mitigate workplace violence.
- Even though each individual study contributes valuable insights regarding the execution of interventions, compelling evidence demonstrating their effectiveness is still lacking. This calls for more rigorous and comprehensive studies to validate and improve the impact of these interventions.

Nielsen and Einarsen's (2018) umbrella review on interventions provides a broader perspective that is not confined to any specific occupation. Rather, it encapsulates general findings derived from various occupational studies on interventions.

- The bulk of studies have exhibited a tendency to focus more intensively on secondary and tertiary interventions as opposed to effective primary interventions.
- It is generally observed that the effectiveness of interventions tends to augment as the level escalates from primary to tertiary. This suggests that the current strategies seem more adept at alleviating the negative repercussions of bullying rather than forestalling its occurrence from the onset.

- Within the workplace context, there is a glaring lack of substantial evidence to affirm that individual or organizational interventions can deter bullying behaviors. This underlines the need for a more robust, evidence-based approach to the development and implementation of anti-bullying interventions.

Implications for Practice from Previous Umbrella Reviews

Academic scholarship has exhaustively reviewed, discussed, and documented implications for practices aimed at mitigating workplace violence and harassment. While the existing literature is extensive and comprehensive, a comprehensive understanding of the practical implications remains insufficient due to a large amount of knowledge and information being presented unsystematically. This section seeks to address this gap by consolidating and systematically analyzing the recommendations and suggestions of prior umbrella reviews. Our discussion revolves around the primary themes of identifying and elucidating practical approaches that can effectively prevent and reduce workplace mistreatment. To facilitate a structured and comprehensive analysis, we have categorized these implications under specific themes that have emerged from the existing literature. A detailed overview of these themes can be found in Table 3. This consolidation of knowledge seeks to provide practitioners, policy makers, and researchers with a ready reference for actionable strategies to address workplace mistreatment.

Multidisciplinary Approach

The first theme to emerge from our analysis revolves around the imperative of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to combat workplace violence and harassment within healthcare organizations. This notion is articulated with clarity by Rossi et al. (2023), who posit that the engagement of various disciplines is critical to maintaining the health of the staff and to ensuring optimal care for patients. The multidisciplinary approach to workplace violence and harassment involves the collaboration of various disciplines and fields to address the problem comprehensively. This approach recognizes that violence and harassment in the workplace are multifaceted issues that require a multifaceted response. Some key components of this approach include legal and regulatory perspective, human resources management, psychological and sociological understanding, education and training, health and safety considerations, medical and counseling support, community involvement, technological solutions, ethical business practices, law enforcement collaboration, ongoing evaluation and improvement, and inclusive collaboration. By integrating legal, psychological, sociological, ethical, and practical considerations, a comprehensive and effective strategy can be developed to prevent and address these serious workplace issues.

Multi-level Interventions

Workplace violence and harassment, which encompasses a broad array of negative behaviors such as bullying, harassment, and incivility, significantly impacts employees across all occupations, affecting their physical and psychological well-being. These behaviors are driven by a combination of factors, which include both individual characteristics and broader organizational, societal, and cultural conditions. As such, an effective prevention and

intervention approach must be multi-level in nature, addressing the issue from multiple angles and at different layers of an organization (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). Such a comprehensive approach not only helps to prevent the occurrence of workplace mistreatment, but also significantly reduces its short-term and long-term detrimental impacts on victims, their colleagues, and the organization as a whole.

Nielsen and Einarsen's (2018) umbrella review provides a structured, comprehensive approach to managing workplace bullying, dividing interventions into primary, secondary, and tertiary stages:

- Primary interventions aim to preempt bullying in the workplace. By focusing on eliminating causative factors, altering the organizational environment, curtailing bullying behaviors in their nascent stages, and enhancing resilience against bullying, the potential for such behaviors can be substantially reduced. Key strategies in primary interventions include delivering workshops on bullying awareness to both employees and organizations and providing conflict resolution training. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives hinges on thorough comprehension of risk groups, causes, attitudes, and the processes that fuel bullying - aspects that unfortunately have been largely overlooked in contemporary workplace bullying research.
- Secondary interventions focus on mitigating the effects of already transpired bullying instances. By early detection, implementation of prevention techniques, support for targets to sustain health and functionality, and modification of bullies' behavior, these interventions help to halt or slow down the bullying process. For secondary interventions to be effective, a comprehensive understanding of the process of bullying, the coping resources available, and the outcome of bullying is required.
- Tertiary interventions, on the other hand, address long-term, often intricate health issues and injuries resulting from bullying. They are designed to enhance the quality of life and longevity of those affected by the enduring impacts of bullying. The efficacy of these interventions largely rests on the validity of knowledge about the health consequences of bullying and the underlying mechanisms that explain these detrimental effects.

Umbrella reviews highlight the critical role of endeavors at both the employee and employer/managerial levels in mitigating workplace violence and harassment (Martinez, 2016). At the employee level, several key initiatives are suggested:

- It is crucial for healthcare professionals, such as nurses, to be cognizant of the available training programs designed to tackle workplace violence within their respective settings.
- It is imperative that employees are empowered to raise concerns and propose effective solutions to the administration.
- Further, engaging with scholarly literature that discusses interventions and strategies to manage workplace violence is strongly recommended. This practice broadens their understanding and raises awareness of the existing methods to combat violence in the workplace.
- To ensure a significant reduction in violent episodes, it is advisable for nurses to apply the evidence-based interventions they learn through their training programs in their daily practices.

Efforts at the employer/managerial level also play a pivotal role in addressing workplace violence and harassment:

- Managers within nursing units are in a strategic position to evaluate potential risk factors in their respective environments and to implement suitable interventions to mitigate these risks.
- Administrative staff within healthcare settings should be responsive to concerns raised by nurses pertaining to safety issues in the workplace. Attentive listening to their proposed solutions for managing violent episodes is key.
- Furthermore, addressing these issues with the execution of evidence-based interventions can help decrease the occurrence of workplace violence. It underscores the importance of proactive managerial involvement in fostering a safer work environment.

Zhang et al. (2019) also offered practical recommendations geared towards both the employee and leadership levels, with a distinct focus on a specific kind of workplace mistreatment: abusive supervision. These suggestions include:

- Organizations can take steps to prevent or mitigate counterproductive work behavior by ensuring that employees are adequately equipped with resources. Methods could include providing stress management training and promoting individuals with a high degree of self-control to help them better cope with abusive supervision.
- Evidence indicates that the capacity for self-control plays a crucial role in mitigating abusive supervisory behaviors. As such, organizations might benefit from selecting supervisors with demonstrably high self-control.
- Institutions may initiate leadership training programs to equip supervisors with improved interpersonal strategies for interacting with employees. Emotional intelligence training could be one method, assisting supervisors in better understanding and responding to employees' ideas, empathizing with their concerns, and offering enhanced support.
- If instances of abusive supervision arise, management should aim to minimize employees' perceptions of injustice, especially if the organization aims to preserve organizational citizenship behavior. This could be achieved by implementing equitable disciplinary procedures to deal with pervasive, systemic abusive supervision. When employees perceive abusive supervision as an anomaly rather than a norm, they are less likely to harbor unfair opinions about the organization.

An Umbrella Review of Synthesis Research on Interventions

The available umbrella reviews on workplace mistreatment offer substantial empirical insights and suggest practical strategies to address this pervasive issue. These reviews consistently highlight the importance of implementing evidence-based interventions and strategies to mitigate the occurrence and impacts of mistreatment in workplaces. However, despite their valuable contributions, these umbrella reviews provide only cursory discussions on these interventions and strategies. Specifically, none of these reviews have endeavored to systematically collate and organize the empirical evidence on interventions aimed at mitigating workplace mistreatment. This absence of a structured approach to synthesizing empirical data

limits the ability to compare and contrast the effectiveness of various interventions, thereby impeding the development of comprehensive, evidence-based strategies. To address this gap in the literature, our current project embarked on an umbrella review of systematic reviews and meta-analyses specifically focused on interventions for workplace violence and harassment. This endeavor serves to strengthen the empirical foundation for intervention strategies and contributes to the broader understanding of effective approaches to address and prevent workplace mistreatment.

Characteristics of Previous Synthesis Research

Following an exhaustive search, a total of nine synthesis research studies were identified. A detailed overview of these studies is provided in Table 4, which outlines the characteristics of each synthesis study. These include the quantity and years of primary studies included in each synthesis, the types of interventions evaluated, the nature of the employment sectors addressed, and the outcome measures that were utilized.

Among the nine synthesis studies located, three utilized a meta-analytical approach (Abeyta & Welsh, 2022; Gillen et al., 2017; Webster et al., 2018), while the remaining six undertook systematic reviews implementing qualitative analysis methodologies. The type of interventions under scrutiny in these studies varied. For instance, two of the studies focused on interventions aimed at preventing a range of workplace mistreatment types (Wassell, 2009; Abeyta & Welsh, 2022). On the other hand, the remaining seven studies explored interventions specifically designed to tackle certain forms of workplace mistreatment. These included psychological aggression (Pacheco et al., 2021), sexual harassment (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022), bullying (Escartin, 2016; Gillen et al., 2017; Van den Brande et al., 2016), incivility (Hodgins et al., 2014), and interventions created to support LGBT employees (Webster et al., 2018).

It is noteworthy that these synthesis studies did not restrict their focus to any particular occupation or industry. Instead, they encompassed a broad array of professions as outlined in their primary studies. This inclusive approach permits a more thorough understanding of the variety and scope of interventions available to combat different types of workplace violence and harassment across diverse occupational sectors.

Main Findings of Previous Synthesis Research

Table 5 presents the results of systematic reviews and meta-analyses according to the types of interventions and outcomes present in each. This section, therefore, seeks to explicate these findings, with an explicit focus on the distinct types of strategies, policies, and intervention modalities that have been employed. It serves as an interpretive guide, providing a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of these interventions, and how they contribute to the broader discourse on addressing workplace violence and harassment.

Single interventions

A single intervention is a targeted and specific strategy that focuses on one aspect of the problem, such as implementing a new policy, conducting individual training sessions, or

enhancing reporting mechanisms. Several synthesis studies have undertaken the task of assessing the efficacy of various singular interventions in mitigating workplace violence and harassment. These investigations have rendered mixed results, with some interventions yielding no impact or, conversely, resulting in negative effects, while others have demonstrated positive outcomes.

The findings regarding single interventions that had either no effect or negative consequences are as follows:

- Zero-tolerance policies increase the likelihood of workplace sexual harassment being reported over less specific or no policies (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022).
- Bullying victimization and perpetration were not significantly different following a cognitive-behavioral intervention compared with no intervention on employees with learning disabilities after the intervention or at three months following the intervention (Gillen et al., 2017).
- Interventions centered on individual self-efficacy exercises failed to influence or reduce the frequency of severe incivility victimization (Hodgins et al., 2014)

Conversely, other synthesis studies discovered single interventions that were successful in reducing workplace violence and harassment. These interventions elicited positive outcomes, as illustrated in the following:

- It is possible to reduce workplace violence through single, simple interventions such as restricting the handling of cash, using drop safes, ensuring unobscured visibility, and utilizing effective lighting to diminish stealth (Wassell, 2009)

Multilevel interventions

Multilevel interventions refer to the systematic approach that targets various levels of an organization, including individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal layers, to reduce and prevent workplace violence and harassment. This strategy incorporates a wide array of policies, practices, and educational methods to tackle the issue holistically. The effectiveness of multilevel interventions in preventing and reducing workplace violence and harassment is an area of significant research interest. Prior synthesis studies have provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject, offering key insights into intervention strategies, their implementation, and outcomes.

Synthesizing the literature, it emerges that multilevel interventions outperform singular strategies in curbing workplace violence and harassment, underscoring the importance of implementing comprehensive approaches.

- The use of multiple environmental designs, applied collectively, has been demonstrated to be most effective in reducing the victimization experienced by employees, particularly in the retail sector (Wassell, 2009).
- The crucial role of support at multiple levels in moderating workplace psychological aggression is highlighted. Coworker-, supervisor-, and management support, coupled with informational support, political skills, job resources, and boosted confidence to confront and counteract aggression, significantly mitigates such adverse behavior (Pacheco et al., 2021).

- A gradual increase in effectiveness was found in workplace bullying interventions from primary to tertiary levels. This trend underscores the need for a tiered approach to intervention, wherein primary prevention focuses on universal strategies, secondary prevention targets at-risk groups, and tertiary prevention addresses individuals already affected by mistreatment. (Escartin, 2016)
- The Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce (CREW) intervention, grounded in the principles of participation, responsiveness, contextual embeddedness, and empowerment, aligns notably with the precepts of effective workplace health promotion practice, thus bolstering its credibility as an intervention against bullying. Moreover, the program distinguishes itself as being theory-driven and employing a competence enhancement approach. It utilizes a blend of actions at various levels to foster mental health, embodying the characteristics typically found in successful mental health programs. (Hodgins et al., 2014)
- With its origins in organizational development—characterized by a focus on nurturing shifts in attitudes, values, and beliefs, as well as emphasizing healthy relationships and processes among individuals and groups within the organization—the CREW intervention evidently positions organizational change as the fundamental solution to addressing incivility (Hodgins et al., 2014)
- The CREW intervention demonstrated a 5% increase in civility from baseline to follow-up, gauged at a span of 6 to 12 months post-intervention. It notably curtailed supervisor incivility victimization, yet no significant reduction was observed in coworker incivility victimization or self-reported incivility perpetration. Further, an examination conducted after a 6-month follow-up revealed a decrease in the frequency of absences recorded in the preceding month. (Gillen et al., 2017).

Taken together, these studies highlight the promise of multilevel interventions in preventing and reducing workplace mistreatment, while also suggesting areas that warrant further exploration.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that positive effects are not a universal outcome of all multilevel interventions. There have been instances where these initiatives have yielded negative results or failed to bring about the desired changes.

- An instance highlighting the variability in multilevel intervention outcomes is reflected in a five-site cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT). This particular study embarked on an assessment of the effectiveness of an integrative approach combining policy communication, stress management training, and negative behavior awareness training. The intervention, despite its comprehensive design, did not lead to any discernible changes in bullying victimization. (Gillen et al., 2017).

This evidence serves as a reminder that while multilevel interventions can hold promise, their success is not guaranteed, and a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play is crucial.

Training

Training interventions represent one of the most frequently assessed strategies in the context of workplace violence and harassment. For instance, it is increasingly becoming standard practice to provide healthcare workers with training on handling violent patients and avoiding injury (Wassell, 2009). The effectiveness of such training interventions has been the subject of numerous synthesis studies.

- The training intervention under scrutiny employed a diverse set of instructional techniques such as lectures, group discussions accompanied by a Q&A segment, case scenarios, interactive exercises, peer group training, and role-playing. These dynamic and engaging methods yielded several positive outcomes. Notably, there was a reported improvement in sensitivity towards the issue of workplace sexual harassment. Additionally, the training contributed to heightened knowledge and awareness of workplace sexual harassment. It is particularly noteworthy that this increase was most pronounced among the men who participated in the training. Furthermore, the training led to an intensified intolerance towards harassment. This could potentially translate into a more proactive stance against such behaviors in the workplace, thereby fostering a safer and more respectful environment. Finally, the training also seemed to enhance the perceived efforts from the workplace to prevent harassment. This perception could play a pivotal role in fostering trust and commitment among employees, highlighting the potential secondary benefits of such training interventions. (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022)
- The training aimed at equipping employees with specific skills to manage workplace sexual harassment scenarios bolstered workers' confidence, self-efficacy, and preparedness. These findings provide evidence that training interventions can directly impact the perceptions and responses of individuals to workplace harassment. (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022)
- The study observed a significant correlation between a higher number of post-training activities and a lower perceived frequency of workplace sexual harassment. This implies that reinforcement activities following initial training may be instrumental in reducing the prevalence of harassment (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022)
- An interesting finding from the study was the lack of significant differences between in-person and computer-based training. This insight could influence future directions for training delivery, with the potential for organizations to leverage the convenience and scalability of online platforms without compromising training effectiveness. (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022)

These findings highlight the potential of well-designed and comprehensive training interventions in mitigating workplace violence and harassment. Nevertheless, it is crucial to tailor these interventions based on specific workplace contexts and continuously assess their effectiveness for ongoing improvement.

Outcomes Measurements

The effectiveness of interventions is intricately tied to the manner in which their outcomes are measured. Two synthesis studies included individual studies that used reported rates to evaluate these initiatives' effectiveness at combating workplace sexual harassment.

- A rise in reported cases was noted after the workplace sexual harassment policy was implemented. This uptick may initially appear counterintuitive, but it might actually indicate heightened awareness and confidence among employees to report such incidents, thus bringing previously unreported cases to light. This suggests that implementing a robust policy could foster an environment where employees feel more comfortable and empowered to report instances of sexual harassment. (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022)
- Divisions with more comprehensive harassment policies—comprising written statements, grievance procedures, and training programs—experienced higher reported rates of workplace sexual harassment than those with less comprehensive policies. Again, this might seem like a negative outcome at first glance. However, it is likely that the comprehensive policies heightened awareness of what constitutes workplace sexual harassment, prompting a surge in the reporting of such incidents. The comprehensive policies might also have made employees feel more supported and secure in coming forward with their experiences, thereby increasing the reported rates. (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022)

These findings underscore the nuanced nature of assessing intervention effectiveness based on reported rates. An increase in reporting does not necessarily reflect an increase in the incidence of workplace harassment but may instead indicate improved awareness and confidence among employees to report such behaviors. Therefore, the analysis of these outcomes should be contextualized appropriately, bearing in mind the myriad factors at play.

The perceived effects of interventions can vary significantly based on whether the outcomes are assessed from the perspective of the alleged perpetrators or the victims. This differential perception underlines the complexities involved in measuring the efficacy of such initiatives.

- To illustrate, a controlled before-after study involving 49 participants compared the effects of expressive writing with a control writing exercise after a period of two weeks. Notably, the results revealed a significant reduction in reported bullying behavior as measured by the incidence of incivility perpetrated by the intervention participants. This suggests that expressive writing might have facilitated self-reflection and empathy among the perpetrators, leading to a reduction in their uncivil behaviors. (Gillen et al., 2017).

Such findings highlight the importance of considering multiple perspectives while assessing the effectiveness of bullying interventions. Future interventions could benefit from integrating diverse strategies that address both perpetrators' behaviors and victims' experiences to ensure a more holistic and effective approach to combating workplace bullying.

The effectiveness of interventions can be significantly swayed by whether the outcomes are assessed based on perceptions or actual behaviors, pointing towards another dimension of complexity in evaluating the impacts of these initiatives.

- Specifically, workplace bullying interventions appear to have a greater influence on aspects such as knowledge, attitudes, and self-perceptions rather than on concrete bullying behaviors. This implies that while interventions may succeed in enhancing understanding of bullying, changing attitudes towards it, and affecting how individuals perceive themselves in relation

to bullying, they might struggle to precipitate substantial changes in actual bullying behaviors. (Escartin, 2016).

This insight calls for a nuanced approach to designing and implementing workplace bullying interventions. It might be beneficial to integrate strategies aimed specifically at influencing behaviors, in addition to those that target knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions. Further research is necessary to better understand how to bridge the gap between perceptual changes and actual behavioral shifts in the context of bullying interventions. The ultimate aim would be to develop comprehensive interventions that effectively target all these aspects to produce a more pronounced and lasting reduction in workplace bullying.

Comparisons

Of the included synthesis studies in this review, two in particular stand out as they employed a rigorous meta-analysis approach, a statistical technique often used for contrasting and combining results from different studies to identify patterns, discrepancies, and other relationships. These two meta-analyses have provided a comprehensive view of the effectiveness of various interventions by systematically comparing different strategies. This not only allowed for an assessment of the overall impact of each intervention but also offered the opportunity to identify which specific interventions yielded more significant results under particular circumstances.

Abeyta and Welsh (2022) conducted a meta-analysis to compare the efficacy of interventions at both the employee and organizational levels. This was conducted across various domains in both the public and private sectors, encompassing small businesses, healthcare institutions, civil service organizations, among others. The effectiveness of these interventions was gauged on their quantitative capacity to reduce the occurrence of interpersonal violence in the workplace, a spectrum that includes various forms of assault, verbal and physical aggression, bullying, and victimization through incivility. Specific findings were as follows:

- The outcomes of Abeyta and Welsh (2022) indicated a moderate, albeit non-statistically significant positive impact in the weighted mean effect sizes for both levels of intervention. For the interventions implemented at the employee-level, the effect size was $d = 0.50$ with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.04 to 1.05 . Similarly, for the organizational-level interventions, the effect size was $d = 0.22$ with a 95% confidence interval spanning from -0.62 to 1.07 .

Although the results do not reach the threshold of statistical significance, they still suggest a positive trend that underlines the potential value of these interventions in minimizing instances of workplace violence.

The results further underscore an interesting trend: the effect size for employee-level interventions is notably larger than that for organizational-level interventions. This indicates that the strategies specifically targeted at employees may have a more substantial impact on reducing instances of workplace violence. This distinction might be due to the fact that employee-level interventions typically involve direct engagement with the individuals most likely to be involved

in or affected by workplace violence. Such strategies often focus on building interpersonal skills, fostering positive work attitudes, and promoting a culture of respect. Conversely, organizational-level interventions, which often involve broad policy changes or systemic adjustments, may take more time to permeate the workplace culture and influence individual behavior significantly. These findings suggest that while both approaches have a role to play, prioritizing employee-focused strategies could be a more effective initial step in curbing workplace violence.

Webster et al. (2018) also performed a comprehensive meta-analysis to assess the effectiveness of three distinct types of contextual support for LGBT employees. These support types included the implementation of formal policies and practices specifically catered to LGBT individuals, fostering an environment that exudes an LGBT-supportive climate, and nurturing supportive workplace relationships.

- These three types of contextual supports exhibited significant correlations with various facets of LGBT employees' experiences in the workplace. Specifically, these supports significantly influenced the employees' work attitudes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover, they also impacted psychological strain, as reflected in measures of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. The supports also shaped the level of sexual orientation disclosure and the employees' perceptions of discrimination.
- Among these supports, the presence of supportive workplace relationships showed a significant correlation with positive work attitudes and a reduction in workplace strain. This underscores the importance of interpersonal relationships and a supportive social network in the workplace in enhancing the work experience of LGBT employees.
- An LGBT-supportive climate was found to be more closely associated with the willingness of employees to disclose their sexual orientation and their perceptions of discrimination compared to the other types of support. This indicates that an overall supportive and accepting environment could potentially reduce perceived discrimination and foster a sense of safety, encouraging openness about sexual orientation.

These findings illuminate the multi-faceted impacts of various forms of support in the workplace, highlighting the need for holistic strategies that address multiple aspects of the work environment.

Implications for Practice from the Umbrella Review on Workplace Interventions

The practical implications of various interventions for workplace violence and harassment, as informed by our in-depth umbrella review, are organized according to primary thematic categories. These main themes, as depicted in Table 6, serve as a roadmap for understanding the practical application of the interventions discussed. Through examining these implications, we aim to provide meaningful insights to inform future policymaking, guide the creation of more effective intervention strategies, and enhance our understanding of the mechanisms that lead to positive workplace culture and environment.

Multimodal interventions

Abeyta and Welsh (2022) unearthed that even less severe manifestations of workplace violence, such as psychological abuse, can have a profound impact on the victims. This adverse effect is amplified, particularly when psychological abuse co-occurs with other forms of violence and victimization within workplace settings. These findings underline the potential for even ostensibly minor mistreatments to instigate significant physical and mental deterioration.

Given the complexity and multifaceted nature of workplace mistreatment, it is crucial to respond with an equally comprehensive strategy. This is where multimodal interventions play an indispensable role. By addressing the issue from various angles, these interventions can target multiple forms of mistreatment concurrently, offering a holistic approach to promoting a healthier, safer workplace. Accordingly, Abeyta and Welsh (2022) underscores the need for comprehensive, multimodal interventions to combat the diverse and intertwined forms of mistreatment experienced at work.

Multi-target interventions (Integrated approach)

While issues like bullying and incivility are frequently seen as individual behavioral problems, it's critical to recognize their deep roots within organizational structures. These challenges are complex organizational issues that require comprehensive and integrated solutions. According to Hodgins et al. (2014), effective prevention of workplace mistreatment necessitates a holistic approach that incorporates individual, organizational, and societal levels. This aligns with comprehensive models promoting workplace health, where the well-being of workers is understood to be a product of various interacting factors, including their physical and psychosocial environment as well as the social and organizational contexts in which they operate.

As highlighted by Pacheco et al. (2021), a comprehensive program aimed at preventing psychological aggression in the workplace must incorporate strategies that cater to all levels of the organization. The involvement of every stakeholder within the organization is pivotal in curating a supportive and harmonious work environment. Hence, an effective prevention program should take an inclusive approach, focusing on creating a culture that discourages aggression in all its forms, whether it originates from supervisors, coworkers, or employees themselves. This multi-targeted strategy is key in holistically addressing and mitigating the occurrence of workplace aggression.

Multi-component interventions

Pacheco et al. (2021) proposed a multi-component intervention strategy to reduce the impact of psychological aggression on personal and organizational outcomes. This includes bolstering organizational support through programs tailored to assist those subjected to psychological aggression, honing leadership skills, and facilitating stress management training. Additionally, fostering a positive violence-prevention climate through training, rapid response practices to aggression, and disseminating relevant information about workplace psychological aggression are key. Lastly, the cultivation of political skills through mentoring is proposed as an effective measure.

Similarly, Gillen et al. (2017) suggest several multifaceted interventions that could effectively curb workplace bullying. Firstly, reinforcing anti-bullying policies and promoting a culture of intolerance towards bullying through active employee engagement can help establish an environment of respect. Secondly, ensuring a safe environment that allows for mediation and negotiation is crucial when dealing with initial instances of problematic behavior. Thirdly, conducting risk assessments that identify job-related precursors to bullying can preemptively mitigate instances of workplace harassment. Lastly, engaging employees in awareness and education sessions can help encourage a reevaluation of their behavior and interactions with colleagues, promoting a more cooperative and harmonious workplace. The combination of these strategies can potentially construct a more robust defense against bullying in the workplace.

Multi-level interventions

The overarching recommendation echoed across all synthesis studies is the imperative need for multi-level interventions in the context of workplace well-being. For instance, Van den Brande et al. (2016) suggested the use of coping strategies and resources that target both personal and work-related antecedents to prevent workplace bullying. This entails a dual focus on improving individual resilience and modifying harmful work practices, thereby holistically addressing the issue at multiple levels.

Similarly, Hodgins et al. (2014) advocated for the design of complex interventions with the explicit goal of reducing incivility at various levels of the organization. This approach could lead to an overall improvement in employee health by systematically addressing negative behavior and attitudes at every level of the workplace hierarchy.

Collectively, these synthesis studies underscore the importance of multi-level interventions as a comprehensive approach to promoting a healthier, more respectful workplace. Rather than isolating interventions at one level, this approach acknowledges the complex, interrelated nature of workplace dynamics, and seeks to address issues from every angle to create a more positive, inclusive working environment.

Multi-stage (in time) Interventions

Escartin's (2016) work shed light on evidence-based interventions applied at different stages, each demonstrating empirical support for their effectiveness. This three-tier approach encompasses:

- **Primary Prevention:** Escartin (2016) emphasized an array of "best practices" for primary prevention, comprising mentoring, coaching, and mediation; the establishment of a formal committee tasked with addressing future bullying incidents; clear articulation of anti-bullying policies specifying what constitutes bullying and what does not; as well as procedures for the early detection, management, and prevention of bullying.
- **Secondary Prevention:** Escartin (2016) highlighted various "best practices" for secondary prevention, including initial informal intervention, the availability of workplace bullying resources within the organization, consistent feedback exchange across hierarchical levels, implementing a zero-tolerance policy against bullying (which should also be included in

contracts for new employees), facilitating opportunities for internal networking and communication, and encouraging the development of assertive communication skills.

- Tertiary Prevention: Escartin's (2016) review of tertiary prevention strategies provided an array of "best practices" that clinical psychologists and professionals could employ to assist victims of workplace bullying. This includes strategies such as fostering emotional distance from negative situations, honing problem-solving skills, developing interpersonal abilities to manage stress and conflict, and the incorporation of occupational and sports therapies. An essential aspect of the therapeutic process is the understanding of the victim's experience, coupled with fostering a hopeful perspective for the future.

Escartin's (2016) synthesis research underlined the importance of adopting a multi-stage approach to interventions, recognizing the need for distinct strategies tailored to the various stages of the bullying phenomenon. It's clear that a combination of these interventions can offer a robust response to the pervasive issue of workplace bullying.

Leadership Commitment

The role of effective leadership in preventing and reducing workplace mistreatment is an important aspect that has been highlighted across multiple synthesis studies. These studies suggested the importance and impact of leadership commitment in reducing instances of workplace violence and harassment.

- Many policies and trainings are implemented merely to comply with a legal requirement, or as symbolic gestures, which diminishes their effectiveness. Diez-Canseco et al. (2022) stressed that employers' genuine intentions should be visible and perceptible to their employees if they are to foster engagement and adherence to policies.
- Escartin (2016) emphasized the role of management commitment in successful anti-bullying interventions. For policies such as zero-tolerance stances on bullying to be effective, managers, leaders, and the organization as a whole must visibly demonstrate their commitment and active involvement.
- Webster et al. (2018) argue that creating truly inclusive environments for LGBT employees requires more than just policies and practices. Employers should strive to foster cultures that support and honor LGBT employees in their workplaces. A focus on encouraging respectful behavior towards LGBT employees, rather than merely enforcing policies, can potentially improve both their workplace performance and the work attitudes and performance of non-LGBT employees in inclusive environments.
- Webster et al. (2018) caution that the absence of negative, discriminatory behaviors does not automatically translate into an actively inclusive environment for LGBT employees. Managers should not only concentrate on eliminating bias but also enhance their commitment to creating authentically inclusive workplace cultures.
- To promote a culture of LGBT equality, Webster et al. (2018) suggest that top management should actively participate in, or even lead, LGBT employee resource group meetings and events. They could also publicly advocate for LGBT equality at national, state, or local levels.
- Webster et al. (2018) underline that leaders can play a pivotal role in fostering LGBT-inclusive work environments and supportive relationships by embodying ally behavior. By

modeling inclusivity from the top, leaders can set the tone and culture for the entire organization.

Way forward

As we bring this report to a close, it is critical to summarize and reflect upon the key aspects of this project and the implications it holds for future research and practices. This report has been divided into two primary sections.

The first part was a qualitative narrative review of existing umbrella reviews on various forms of workplace mistreatment, aiming to comprehend the breadth and depth of this issue. A major finding of this project was that a large amount of research has been conducted regarding the prevalence and consequences of workplace mistreatment. The empirical data collated and analyzed in this project indicated that workplace mistreatment is not a regionally isolated phenomenon but rather, a pervasive global issue affecting a multitude of industries. A particularly significant revelation is the noticeably higher prevalence of mistreatment within the healthcare sector. Healthcare workers, regardless of their specific roles or the nature of their duties, often face undue stressors and pressures which can, unfortunately, foster an environment conducive to various forms of mistreatment. However, it is also crucial to highlight that our findings do not suggest an exemption of other occupations from such problematic dynamics. Rather, our study reveals a broad spectrum of occupations, beyond healthcare, where workplace violence and harassment are evident to varying degrees. This reinforces the reality that workplace violence and harassment is a universally relevant concern necessitating targeted interventions across all sectors.

Despite a substantial body of research investigating the prevalence of workplace violence and harassment, it is worth noting that obtaining an accurate incidence and prevalence rate remains a challenge. These hurdles stem from various factors, including underreporting of incidents and the differing conceptualizations of what constitutes mistreatment. This precise information is indispensable for formulating effective, issue-specific, and contextually appropriate prevention strategies and interventions. Rossi et al. (2023) underscored the significance of utilizing standardized measurement methods when investigating workplace mistreatment. By embracing a unified approach, we can assure that data derived from diverse settings and countries are both comparable and accurate. This, in turn, can significantly enhance the quality of research in this area and drive the development of more robust and effective policies and interventions for workplace violence and harassment.

Through the comprehensive review of existing umbrella reviews conducted in this project, it has been unveiled that a standard set of instruments or measurements for workplace mistreatment is conspicuously absent in the academic realm. Moreover, the conceptualization of workplace mistreatment, along with its various forms and classifications, remains a subject of considerable debate, with a consensus among scholars still elusive. Notably, while significant strides have been made by some prominent academics to address these issues, the discourse remains confined within a limited scope. Further, it is apparent that these efforts are not evenly distributed across different disciplines. For instance, the fields of criminology and its related disciplines have seen a different trajectory of discussions compared to business, management,

and psychology. These disparate conversations across fields underscore the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of workplace mistreatment. These gaps limit the comparability of research findings and hinder the development of cohesive strategies and interventions.

To address these limitations, it is suggested that academic researchers collaborate closely to develop and validate a standardized set of instruments for measuring workplace violence and harassment. This would include creating definitions and typologies that capture the wide range of violence and harassment forms in the workplace. These standards should be flexible enough to be adapted to various workplace contexts yet robust enough to ensure consistency and comparability across studies. Further, organizational managers and leaders should be part of this process. Their insights from a practical standpoint can greatly enrich the theoretical underpinnings and ensure that the developed tools have applicability in real-world settings. By participating in this process, organizations can also better align their internal policies and practices with the latest research findings, leading to a more effective and proactive response to workplace mistreatment.

The second, and perhaps more substantial part, conducted an umbrella review of the synthesis research on the effectiveness of various interventions for workplace violence and harassment, and their associated policy implications. Despite the existence of limited and sometimes inconclusive evidence on certain policies and interventions, our analysis underscored the strength of empirical support for a subset of interventions in reducing or preventing workplace violence and harassment (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022).

Notably, interventions characterized by their multi-level, multi-target, and multi-component nature demonstrated significant effectiveness across a broad range of workplace mistreatment types. These interventions, which simultaneously address the individual, group, and organizational levels, showed substantial promise in curtailing mistreatment, suggesting a holistic approach that targets multiple aspects of an organization may be most effective. Furthermore, they encompass a wide array of components, such as policy enforcement, training programs, conflict resolution, and support systems, making them applicable and adaptable to diverse workplace environments. This supports the view that addressing workplace violence and harassment requires a complex and layered approach, rather than simplistic, one-size-fits-all strategies.

It is essential to establish efficacious primary interventions tailored to cater to the diverse risk groups, discerning the underlying causes, attitudes, and operations that instigate instances of workplace violence and harassment. This involves a comprehensive understanding of these elements which, regrettably, most of the existing research on workplace mistreatment has largely disregarded. An additional focal point for this research would be the design and implementation of potent secondary interventions. Such measures would necessitate a profound comprehension of the intricacies of workplace mistreatment as a systematic process. Furthermore, an understanding of the resources available for coping and the potential consequence of workplace mistreatment is also critical. Finally, the effective realization of tertiary interventions hinges on reliable insights about the health impacts triggered by workplace mistreatment and the mechanisms that facilitate the propagation of its damaging effects (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018).

The imperative to intensify research efforts regarding the array of interventions applicable in diverse environments for the mitigation of recurring adverse episodes cannot be overemphasized (Martinez, 2016). A broad and multi-layered investigation encompassing all facets of workplace violence and harassment is warranted to form the basis of these interventions. The development and application of evidence-based interventions - comprehensive programs and policies aimed at mitigating workplace mistreatment - are intrinsically tied to a rigorous, methodical research design. Despite the potential shown by such interventions, there is a clear call for additional investigations to refine their structure, application, and assessment within diverse organizational settings and cultures.

Future research should harness the full potential of well-defined intervention and control groups to garner reliable insights about the efficacy of these interventions (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). The design of intervention studies should not just focus on outcomes, but also aim to explicitly explore the mechanisms through which these interventions induce change, and on occasions, why they may not yield expected results. Moreover, a process evaluation is necessary to dissect the psychological and organizational mechanisms that either obstruct or expedite desired outcomes of interventions. Such an assessment will provide an intricate understanding of the functioning of interventions, helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). This in-depth, scientific exploration will foster the development of evidence-based interventions that are not only theoretically sound, but also practical, efficient, and universally applicable across a spectrum of occupations and workplaces.

Our current umbrella review has underscored the significance of commitment from leadership and management in fostering a culture resilient to workplace violence and harassment (Webster et al., 2018). Dedicated engagement of leaders and managers appears to be crucial for the successful implementation of research-validated, evidence-based interventions tailored to their environments' unique contexts and circumstances (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022). The importance of leadership commitment in this matter cannot be overstated. It is a vital cornerstone in the establishment and maintenance of a healthy, respectful workplace environment, reflecting directly on the success of intervention programs and policies.

As the field of workplace mistreatment continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly imperative for organizational leaders and managers to remain conversant with the latest empirical research findings. Our current project has brought forth a multitude of essential updates to our scientific comprehension of this area. For instance, the latest research has brought to light that both computer-based and instructor-led training approaches produce similar outcomes. Consequently, these methodologies can be adopted independently or in an integrated manner, contingent upon the unique requirements of the workplace and the digital literacy of the workforce (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022). Furthermore, our current project has consolidated several pieces of synthesis research, each of which attest to the robust effectiveness of CREW in combating workplace mistreatment. With the continual evolution of knowledge, it is vital for organizational leaders and managers to persistently update their strategies, interventions, and policies to both deter and ameliorate the various rampant forms of workplace mistreatment. Such proactive measures not only augment employee satisfaction and well-being but also have a substantial positive influence on customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to enhanced organizational profitability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we hope that this project report contributes to the broad dissemination of the latest scientific knowledge and information on workplace mistreatment. The main contribution of this project is to provide evidence-based recommendations that can be applied immediately to address workplace mistreatment. Despite the inherent limitations, we believe that our findings can serve as a catalyst for positive change within the realm of workplace dynamics and wellbeing. We are also optimistic that this report will inspire more rigorous research on this important topic. It is crucial for future research to be translational. In other words, the design and goals of the workplace mistreatment research should be established in collaboration with practitioner-researcher partnerships, and the research descriptions and outcomes should be written in a manner that is comprehensible to practitioners. This approach ensures that research findings are effectively translated into practice, bridging the gap between theory and implementation, and fostering healthier and more respectful workplace environments.

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